



Supporting seafarers and their families: challenges for the future

The report of
the Maritime
Charities Funding
Group research
programme on the
needs of the
UK seafaring
community

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MAY 2007

Message from the Charity Commission

This report shows clearly what maritime charities are up against. The sheer scale of need, in all its forms, among seafarers and their families makes sobering reading. This is a major research endeavour which deserves to be as widely known and as widely used as possible.

I applaud the Maritime Charities Funding Group for recognising the challenges maritime charities face and for their determination to maximise the use and impact of the resources available to charities.

With finite resources being stretched ever further, one of the most potent ways for charities to achieve their goals is by developing partnerships, making the most of collaboration and raising professional standards.

Your beneficiaries are among the least visible people in our society and this report shows how often this leads to patchy service provision for those in the greatest need. Your beneficiaries face the additional burden imposed by the geographical concentration of their industries. Poverty, despair and isolation have a tendency to affect not just whole households, but whole areas – leading to the perpetuation of vicious circles.

This is where maritime charities can really make the most of working together and with others in the sector. Whatever the issue involved, there is a role for more collaborative working. Working with charities that provide public services, for example, you can offer the facts and grassroots knowledge to help them target your beneficiaries, and justify funding for better services from their commissioning authorities.

Working together, maritime charities now have the evidence to raise the profile of their beneficiaries' needs and place them higher in the public policy debate. And this type of work is political activity and campaigning at its best – charities recognising their common goals and putting the interests of their beneficiaries at the top of the agenda. It can be a long haul but there is a wide range of precedents that shows what can be achieved when charities work together with commitment towards a common goal.

The extent of existing best practice among maritime charities can only be hinted at in this report. Getting this out to all charities in this field is a challenge you should embrace wholeheartedly as a key tool in raising effectiveness throughout your sector.

Maritime charities can already point to strong and innovative examples of partnership working and collaboration. After all, working together and collaborating to get the job done has always been an intrinsic part of the professional maritime ethos.

Armed with this unprecedented report, I urge you to consider still greater collaborative endeavour with others in your sector and beyond. Your beneficiaries have everything to gain.

Andrew Hind
Chief Executive, Charity Commission
May 2007

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Foreword from the Maritime Charities Funding Group

This report offers a summary of the findings of the extensive research programme commissioned by the Maritime Charities Funding Group (MCFG)* in 2006. Four independent research teams worked with maritime and other charities, public and independent organisations, and seafarers and their families to build a comprehensive picture of the needs and aspirations of the whole seafaring community. The research focused on four population groups:

- ☐ older seafarers and their dependants
- ☐ working-age seafarers
- ☐ families and dependants of working age seafarers
- ☐ young people in maritime youth groups.

The MCFG commissioned the research to provide a resource for all organisations that work with seafarers. The recommendations will inform the development of new working methods and high standards in the planning and provision of services for seafarers and their families. As well as this summary, electronic versions of the full report from each research team are available from the Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB). I hope they will inspire you to consider how your organisation can become more effective in its work.

The MCFG charities will continue to work together, and with other organisations, to support maritime charities in implementing the recommendations. As a first step, the MNWB plans to reduce the real value of investments over the next 20 years in order to increase its support for beneficiaries with the greatest needs. Other members are considering how to respond to the research findings, and the new Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity, shortly to join the MCFG, will use the research findings as its grant making evolves. This will involve, *inter alia*, proper dispersal of increasing funds from Greenwich Hospital as this singular Crown Charity focuses more benevolence on the newly-identified frontline needs.

The research found that existing charity practices are, in many respects, inadequate to meet the current and future needs of the seafaring community. Despite falling levels of maritime employment in the UK there is no evidence that levels of need within the seafaring community are falling. The number of older seafarers in the merchant and fishing sectors is expected to increase or remain stable over the next 15 years, and the complex needs of seafaring families affected by absent parents are unlikely to diminish.

The needs of serving seafarers are changing. Most now come from overseas and traditional services, such as seafarers' centres in ports, are likely to be less used while the role of ship welfare visitors in meeting and greeting seafarers is increasingly important.

Funding for the research programme was provided by the MCFG member charities, the Veterans' Minister's Challenge Fund from the Ministry of Defence, the International Transport Federation Charitable Trust and the Guy's and St Thomas' Charity Dreadnought Fund. I would like to thank

* The Maritime Charities Funding Group is a working group made up of maritime charities that make grants to support organisations. The members are: the Merchant Navy Welfare Board, NUMAST Welfare Funds, Seafarers UK, the Seamen's Hospital Society, Trinity House and UK affiliates of the ITF Seafarers Trust (Nautilus UK).

the many charities outside the MCFCG, and thousands of seafarers and their families, who have been involved with the research.

I would also particularly like to thank the research teams for their hard work in providing such a challenging agenda for action – Insight Social Research working with ORS, the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, the National Children’s Bureau and the Working Lives Research Institute at London Metropolitan University – as well as Sarah Buchanan, the project manager for the research programme.

Captain David Parsons MNI
Chairman, Maritime Charities Funding Group
May 2007



Trinity House



SECTION A

The needs and aspirations of the seafaring community: an overview

1 RESEARCHING SEAFARERS' NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS

In 2006 the Maritime Charities Funding Group (MCFG)¹ commissioned a research programme to identify the needs and aspirations of the seafaring community². The aim was to inform maritime charities and other organisations about the current and future needs of the community so they can better develop their services in response. The MCFG hopes that the findings will also help other maritime organisations to develop their policies and practices and improve the work of general voluntary and public services³ with the seafaring community. This report presents a summary of the research findings.

The UK seafaring community was defined as comprising:

- ☐ current seafarers – people who normally work at sea in the maritime industries and who are either normally resident in, or visiting, the UK as a serving seafarer
- ☐ former seafarers – people who used to work in the maritime industries and are normally resident in the UK
- ☐ the dependants and families of working or former seafarers
- ☐ young people involved with maritime youth groups.

For this research the maritime industries were defined as:

- ☐ the Naval Service, including the Royal Marines, Queen Alexandra's Royal Naval Nursing Service (QARNNS) and associated Reserve Forces
- ☐ the Merchant Navy, including the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, British seafarers working on UK and foreign-flagged vessels and large yachts
- ☐ all sea fishing activities
- ☐ directly-related industries which employ seafarers (including pilots, marine surveyors, marine managers and those employed on large yachts).

The research was structured around four population groups:

- ☐ **older seafarers and their dependants** over the usual retirement age⁴
- ☐ **working age seafarers**, including those working at sea, former seafarers under the usual retirement age, and Merchant Navy cadets and trainees

1 The MCFG is a working group made up of maritime charities that make grants to support organisations. The members comprise the Merchant Navy Welfare Board (MNWB), NUMAST Welfare Funds, Seafarers UK, the Seamen's Hospital Society, Trinity House and UK affiliates of the ITF Seafarers' Trust (Nautilus UK). Between them, they provide grants for capital projects, start-up costs and on-going (revenue) costs for initiatives that support the seafaring community. NUMAST Welfare Funds, the Seamen's Hospital Society and Trinity House also provide grants to individual seafarers in need.

2 The research was funded by the Maritime Charities Funding Group, the Minister for Veterans' Challenge Fund, the ITF Charitable Trust and the Guy's and St Thomas' Charity Dreadnought Hospital Fund, and undertaken by four research teams: Insight Social Research working with ORS, the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, National Children's Bureau (NCB), and the Working Lives Research Institute at London Metropolitan University. Electronic versions of the full reports are available from the Merchant Navy Welfare Board at www.mnwb.org.uk.

3 Throughout this report, the term general services is used to refer to available public or voluntary services that are not specifically targeted at seafarers, their dependants or their families.

4 The usual retirement age varies within the industry. To reflect available data and industry patterns, the research defined the usual age of retirement as 60 in the Naval Service and the fishing fleets and 62 in the Merchant Navy. Former Naval Service personnel aged between 45 and 60 were considered as "working age" seafarers.

- ☐ dependants and families of working-age seafarers
- ☐ young people in maritime youth groups.

Population profiles and projections were used to assess the current and future size of the seafaring community and the scale of response likely to be required to meet members' needs and aspirations.

Through questionnaire surveys, focus groups and interviews, some 4,000 seafarers, former seafarers, dependants and young people participated in the research, and over 80 organisations provided information and insights. The information collected was analysed in the context of other research about the seafaring community, the profile of needs among the general population and among ex-Service personnel, and current and expected trends in public policy.

The findings from the research programme provide a clear picture against which maritime charities can assess their priorities, and plan their services and future financial commitments. Some of the recommendations reinforce charities' existing insights and approaches, while others suggest changes to services and ways of working that may make more impact and more effective use of charities' resources.

2 THE SEAFARING COMMUNITY: SIZE AND NEEDS

In 2005 there were almost 1.5 million people in the UK seafaring community, comprising:

- ☐ 81,000 working seafarers
- ☐ 277,000 former seafarers of working age
- ☐ 717,000 former seafarers and their dependants over the usual retirement age
- ☐ 204,000 adult dependants and 157,000 children (aged under 18) of working age seafarers
- ☐ 13,000 sea cadets.

UK merchant seafarers made up less than 2.7% of the global maritime workforce. The proportion of UK seafarers on different ships varied widely between types of ship and jobs. Between 5,000 and 6,000 non-UK seafarers arrived in UK ports each day.

Population profiles and projections were defined using official statistics and academic and industry research. The limited data available about the maritime workforce means the figures in this report indicate a likely range of estimates based on the impact of industry and population trends on the seafaring community. If more and better data become available, it will be important to refine the projections in this report. One of the key conclusions of the research is the need for better and more consistent data about seafarers to be routinely collected, analysed and shared within the industry and beyond. The current projections suggest that the seafaring community will change in size and proportion within the ranges shown in Figures A1 to A7.

About 100 charities directly support the seafaring community in the UK. Together they spend around £125 million each year in direct support for at least 50,000 people who are current or former seafarers, their dependants or families. This support includes:

- ☐ regular and one-off grants for individual needs, including health care, social care and education
- ☐ housing, accommodation and care services
- ☐ information and advice about welfare needs
- ☐ pastoral and spiritual care.

Estimates drawn from the research suggest that up to 50% of the UK seafaring community – around 725,000 people – will have needs that maritime charities will be able to meet or alleviate. In addition, the 5,000 to 6,000 non-UK seafarers visiting UK ports each day are likely to have needs that charities may be able to respond to. To reach even half the people in potential need, charities will need to act on the recommendations in this report.

FIGURE A1: THE SEAFARING COMMUNITY 2005-20

	Total (range)	Naval Service	Merchant Navy	Fishing
2005	1,344-1,431,000	940-997,000	270-294,000	134-140,000
2010	1,137-1,231,000	785-843,000	248-270,000	104-118,000
2015	1,021-1,118,000	702-766,000	224-247,000	95-105,000
2020	858-955,000	594-660,000	190-209,000	74-86,000

Broadly, the research suggests that:

- ☛ up to 20% of seafarers’ children and families, and 24% of older seafarers, have difficulty in making ends meet
- ☛ at least 35% of fishermen and 12% of merchant ratings experience significant debt
- ☛ at least 50% of all seafarers – and 85% of fishermen – do not, or are unlikely to, receive a pension other than the state pension
- ☛ over 30% of merchant seafarers – and over 45% of fishermen – have needed medical care in order to continue working at sea
- ☛ among children and families of seafarers in contact with charities, up to 30% have complex and substantial emotional needs related to the death or ill-health of a parent, or lack of contact with an absent parent.

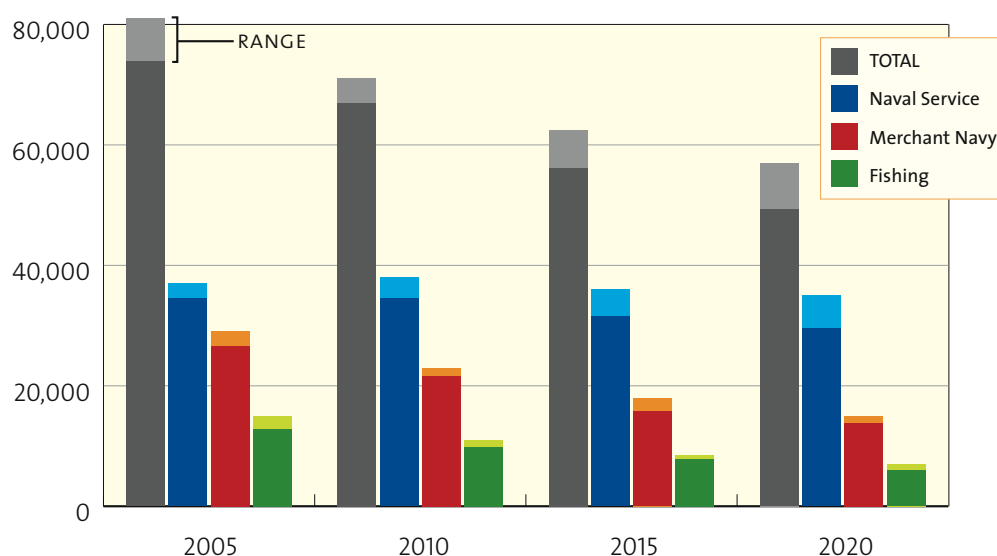
The scale of this challenge suggests that it is essential for maritime charities to find new ways of working that will maximise the effective use of their resources.

2.1 Working in the maritime industries

The number of UK seafarers working in merchant shipping and fishing has been falling for many years and the Government is now planning to reduce further the number of Naval Service recruits. The proportion of non-UK seafarers working in merchant shipping and fishing is increasing globally, as are the numbers visiting UK ports and working in the UK.

There were an estimated 81,000 UK nationals working in the maritime industries in 2005, and this figure is set to fall in line with the projections shown in Figure A2.

FIGURE A2: WORKING UK SEAFARERS 2005-20



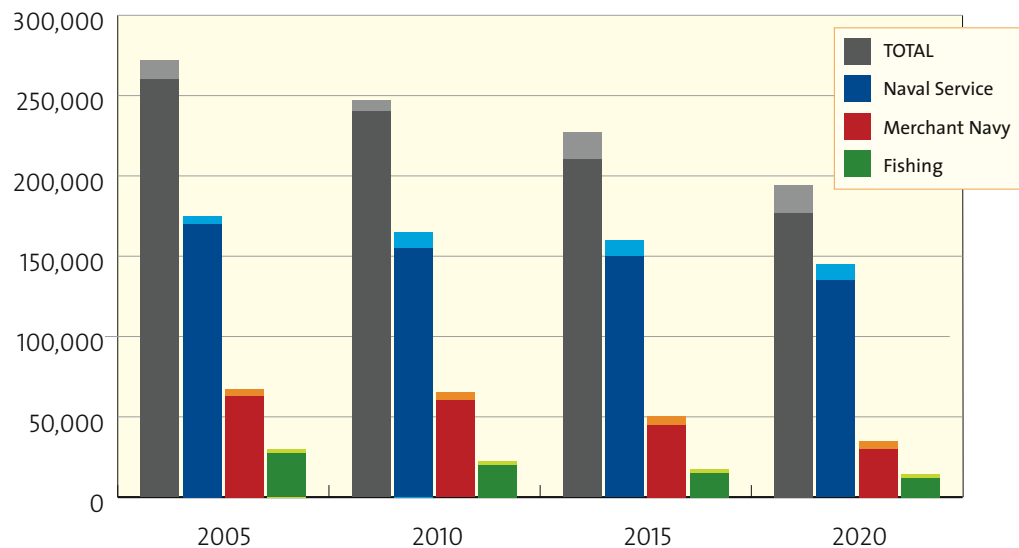
Limited data on the numbers of non-UK seafarers arriving in UK ports make it difficult to arrive at firm numbers or projections. Analysis of ship arrivals and published research into the nationalities of crews suggests that between 5,000 and 6,000 non-UK seafarers will arrive in UK ports each day, not all of whom will leave their ship and some of whom will make repeat visits.

2.2 Former seafarers of working age

Declining employment in merchant shipping and fishing in the UK, and the trend in the Naval Service towards shorter periods of engagement, mean that, despite falling numbers of working seafarers, there will continue to be large numbers of former seafarers for many years to come. Many of these will have had shorter careers at sea than in the past, with implications for eligibility for charity support.

Across the industry, the number of former seafarers of working age is expected to change in line with the projections shown in Figure A3.

FIGURE A3: FORMER UK SEAFARERS OF WORKING AGE 2005-20



2.3 Older seafarers and their dependants

Change in the number of former seafarers and their immediate dependants who are over the usual retirement age varies between sectors, reflecting the current and historical age profiles within the industry and the declining number of surviving former Naval Service personnel who served during and immediately after World War Two. The variations are also affected by the increasing longevity of the large number of seafarers now aged over 50. Projections of the numbers of older seafarers and their older dependants are shown in Figures A4 and A5.

FIGURE A4: OLDER SEAFARERS 2005-20

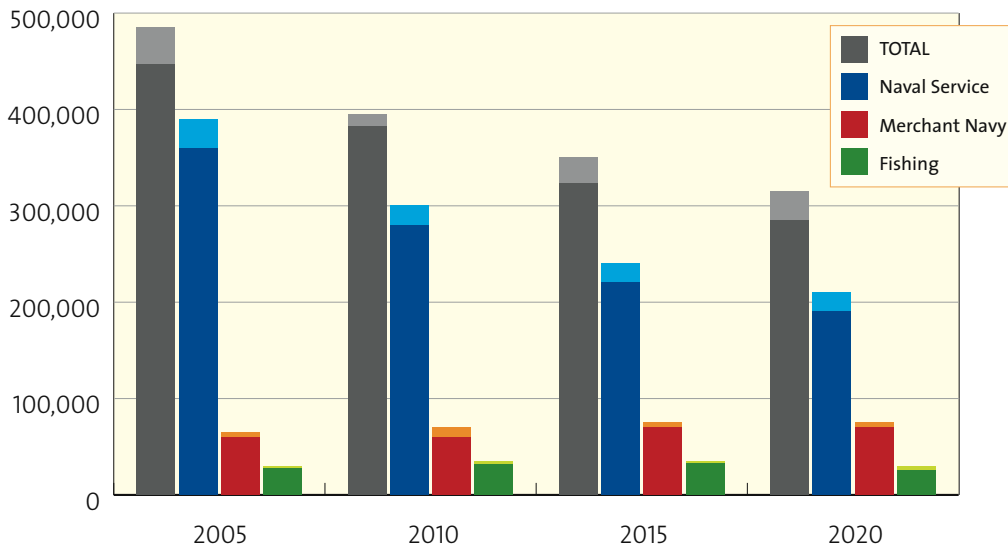
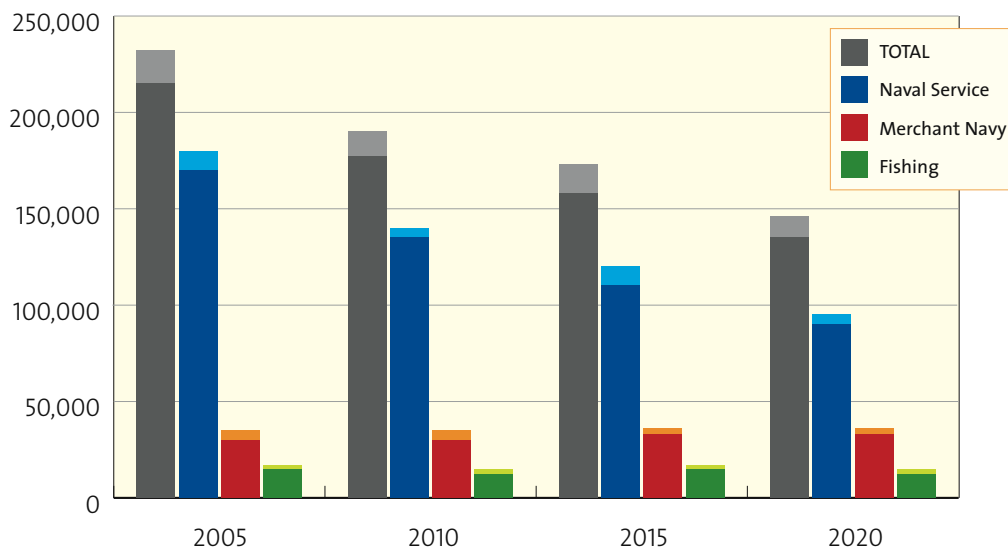


FIGURE A5: OLDER DEPENDANTS 2005-20



2.4 Dependants and children of working age seafarers under the usual age of retirement

The total number of adult dependants and children aged under 18 of working and former seafarers under the usual retirement age will fall over time, as shown by Figures A6 and A7 overleaf. The rate and scale of change reflects change in the industry, labour turnover, rates of divorce, separation and remarrying among seafarers and the national trend towards a lower birth rate.

FIGURE A6: CHILDREN AGED UNDER 18 2005-20

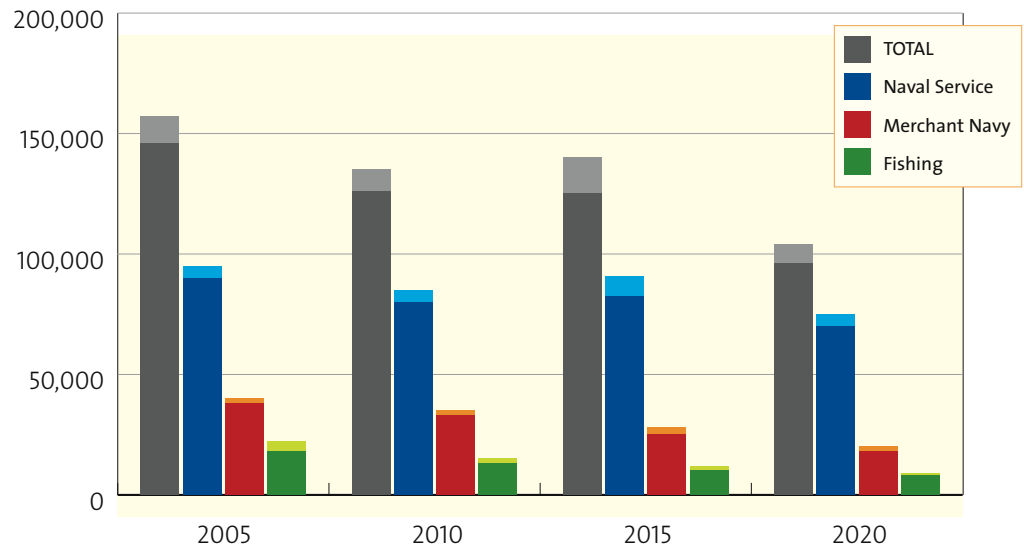
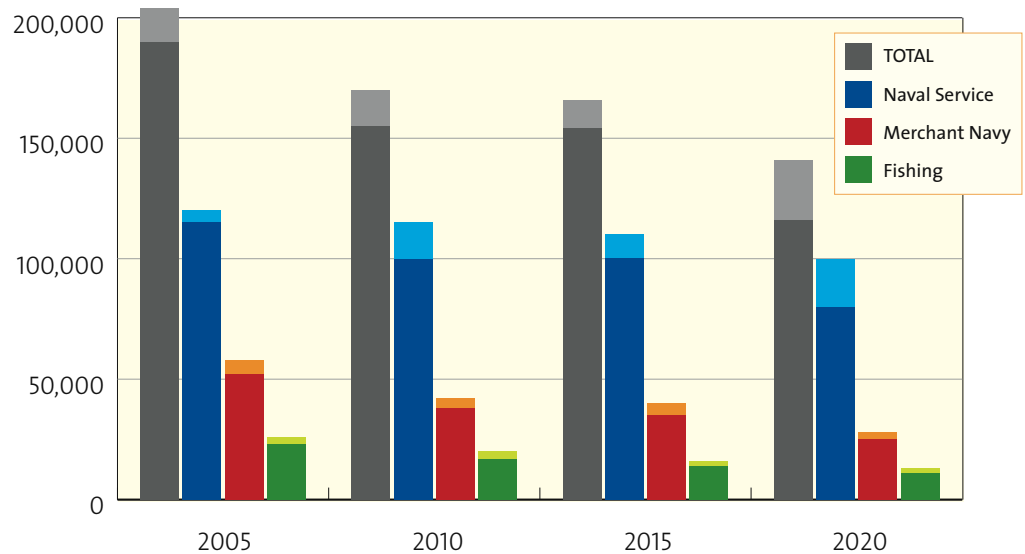


FIGURE A7: ADULT DEPENDANTS OF UK SEAFARERS



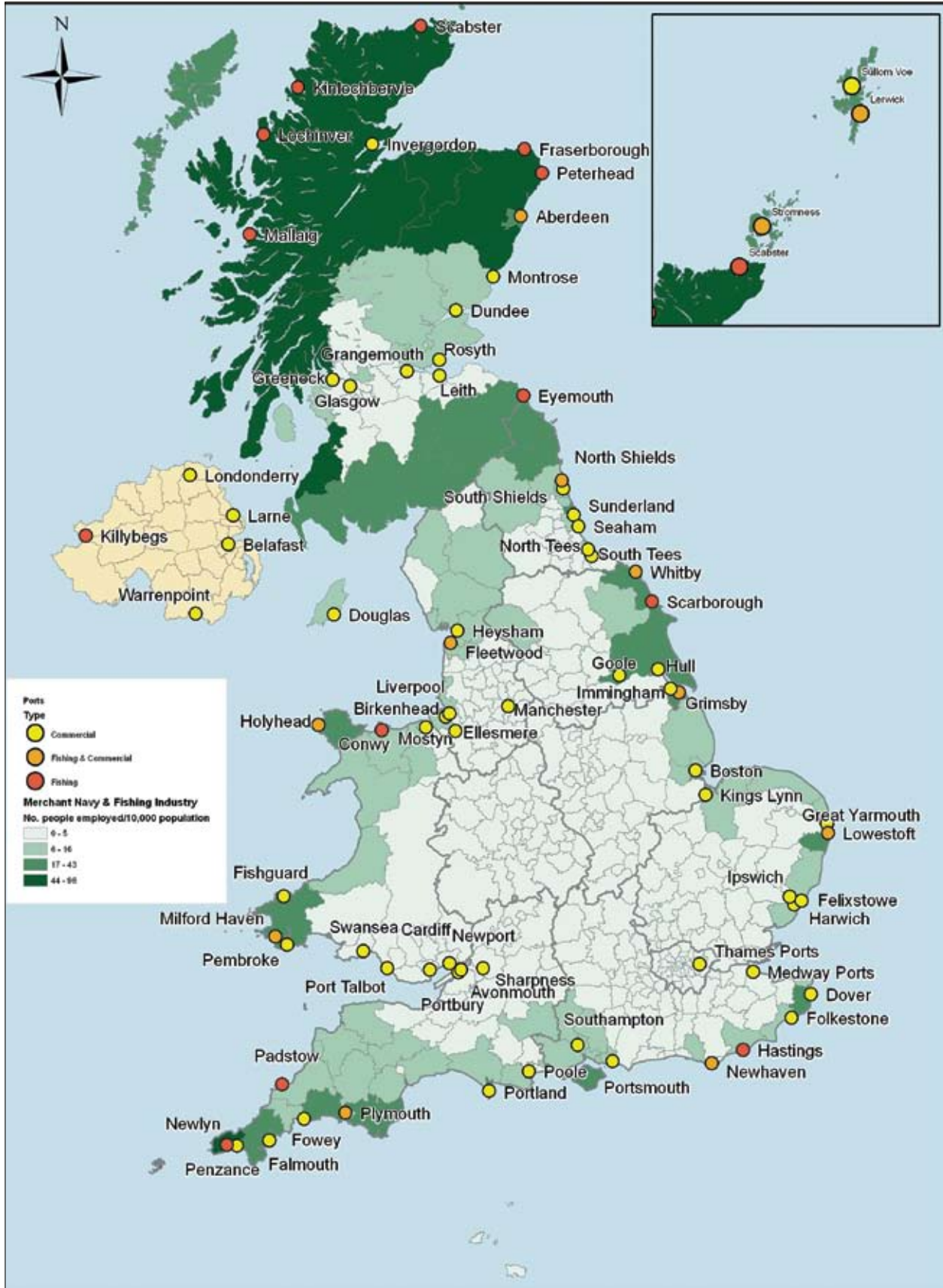
2.5 Young people involved in maritime youth groups

The number of young people involved in maritime youth groups has been falling by 3-4% annually for many years. This reflects falling birth rates, changing youth interests and activities, and a general decline in membership of uniformed youth groups. There are now 13,000 Sea Cadets and about 1.5 million young people involved in all uniformed youth groups. Experience suggests a continuing decline at a rate of between 3 and 5% a year. In response, many uniformed groups are reviewing their work to ensure they remain attractive and relevant to young people.

2.6 Geography

There is no evidence that the current geographical concentrations of seafarers will change significantly. Data from the Rail, Maritime and Transport union (RMT) and Nautilus UK show that

FIGURE A8: DISTRIBUTION OF SEAFARERS, MERCHANT NAVY AND FISHING BY POSTCODE AND CENSUS
(number of employees per 10,000 population)



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merchant seafarers remain concentrated in port areas, but with a growing number scattered across the country (see Figure A8). Over time, it appears that the geographical distribution of seafarers other than fishermen (who are likely to remain close to fishing ports) will more closely resemble that of the general population.

The movement of dependants and families away from port areas is likely to continue, reflecting the effect of families breaking up and the trend for more Naval Service families to seek permanent homes outside the vicinity of Naval bases.

2.7 *Charity responses*

Projections of the changing population structure of the seafaring community offers charities a tool to assess the pattern of potential demand for charitable responses. It appears that for at least the next 20 years the size of the seafaring community will decline but that rates and patterns of change will vary across the industry sectors and across age groups. It is not surprising that, for the foreseeable future, the Naval Service will remain the largest population group.

3 THE SEAFARING COMMUNITY: LIVES, NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS

3.1 *Characteristics of the community*

The research found broad similarities in lifestyles across the industry sectors and population groups apart from those of young people in maritime youth groups. It is clear that, regardless of industry or job, seafaring is a lifestyle as well as a job, and this lifestyle is a continuing feature of life in retirement and affects the lives of dependants and families.

Throughout the research, seafarers made clear that they had made positive choices about their careers and enjoyed and appreciated many aspects of their jobs and seafaring lives. At the same time, the research sought to define the nature and scale of the many problems and concerns faced by seafarers, and those affecting the whole seafaring community, so that charities can better assess and target needs which are particular to the community and which other organisations do not address.

Leaving young people in maritime youth groups aside, the research identified five lifestyle characteristics that are shared across the industry sectors and population groups. It is not the case that these always have negative effects on seafarers and their families, but it is clear that these characteristics may exacerbate needs.

3.1.1 *Separation and isolation*

People in the seafaring community often experience feelings of separation and isolation:

- ☪ from homes and families, for seafarers working at sea
- ☪ from partners or parents, for dependants and families at home
- ☪ from shipmates, working roles and routines, while ashore, out of work or in retirement
- ☪ from other occupations and communities
- ☪ from general organisations and services
- ☪ increasingly, as crew sizes and facilities change and working hours increase, from colleagues while working at sea.

Put simply, working at sea involves a relatively small number of people in an occupation that differs significantly from many others. The small size of the industry and its distinctive features create a separate identity and camaraderie that are important reasons for choosing a maritime career and a key element in the enjoyment of seafaring work and lifestyles. But this reinforces isolation. Former seafarers seek out people who share their work experiences and working seafarers miss their working lives while ashore.

For former seafarers, the loss of the structures and camaraderie of life on board ship, and the absence of social networks ashore, increase their experience of separation and isolation, and reinforce their sense of self-reliance.

Across the seafaring community people feel that their lives and lifestyles are not understood by others and that this lack of awareness makes some general services unsuitable for them.

3.1.2 *Continuous cycles of dislocation and re-adjustment*

Working at sea disrupts the home lives of seafarers, their dependants and families. Seafarers face constant demands for re-adjustment between being at home and at sea, and between their lifestyles at sea and ashore, when between jobs, or after ceasing to work at sea. Some enjoy and appreciate this while others experience disruption and anxiety.

Families and dependants also face continuing needs for re-adjustment each time a partner or parent goes away to sea or returns home. In some cases, they must also adjust to long-term illness, disability or death that is directly associated with work at sea.

For some seafarers, these cycles of dislocation and re-adjustment seem to be connected to marriage break-ups and to decisions not to marry or form long-term relationships, and are reflected in the high proportion of seafarers who are single.

The research findings suggest that the partners or wives of seafarers are often self-reliant. While they are used to managing alone, they often look for support for their children. Their isolation from general and maritime services that offer support for families and children often means these needs are not met.

Transitions between sea and shore life, and between stages of life, pose significant challenges for many seafarers, their dependants and families. Support during these transitions can significantly enhance people's long-term independence and prevent their needs escalating.

3.1.3 *Physical and emotional hazards*

Seafarers face physical and emotional hazards:

- ☛ in their working and living environments when at sea
- ☛ in managing day-to-day life ashore without the structures of life onboard ship, during retirement, unemployment or other employment.

Seafarers, and their families and dependants, also face physical and emotional problems linked to separation, isolation and adjustment.

Maritime jobs are among the most dangerous in the UK. Disability, illness and death rates are high. High standards of physical fitness are essential, and merchant seafarers require a medical certificate to work at sea. The effect on seafarers is clear in high rates of musculo-skeletal problems, infectious diseases and mental ill-health. Medical conditions are often diagnosed and treated late or not at all. Ill-health is the main reason why many seafarers in the UK, after a substantial career, stop working at sea before the usual retirement age.

3.1.4 *Self-reliance and autonomy*

Seafarers' lifestyles are often characterised by:

- ☛ reliance on personal skills and resources to resolve problems
- ☛ reluctance to seek support from others, including maritime charities and organisations
- ☛ the importance of family, friends and colleagues in providing information, advice and support.

Self-reliance is one of the attractions of a maritime career. But it can also feed the isolation and separation that seafarers, and their dependants and families, experience. Among seafarers, sharing

problems or seeking help to resolve them is unusual, and information sources are often limited to colleagues and family. Seafarers have low levels of awareness and use of general voluntary or public services, and informal networks of colleagues and family are generally used to help resolve problems. This approach may prevent seafarers and their families from accessing appropriate resources, and leave problems unresolved. For non-UK seafarers, access to information and support when in the UK may be particularly difficult.

3.1.5 *Poverty and debt*

Although problems with poverty and debt are not common to everyone in the seafaring community, where they exist their effects are serious and may reflect:

- ☐ disrupted National Insurance (NI) records and difficulty accessing statutory benefits for seafarers who have worked abroad or been self-employed
- ☐ limited pension provision, particularly among fishermen and UK Merchant Navy ratings who have been self-employed or worked on contracts, as a result of disrupted NI records and the lack of personal or employer-provided pensions
- ☐ changing employment patterns in the industry
- ☐ low or unpredictable levels of income
- ☐ money management problems, exacerbated by debt.

Poverty particularly affects young seafarers on low incomes and seafarers over retirement age, many of whom rely on state pensions. Adult dependants and children in households with a single parent, or an ill or disabled parent, are also likely to be affected. Fishermen are most likely to experience poverty. Debt principally affects young seafarers and families headed by people aged under 40 regardless of industry sector.

3.2 *Different needs within the seafaring community*

The general picture described above conceals variations within the seafaring community and in its pattern of needs.

Young people involved in maritime youth groups had particular needs related to their career aspirations, at sea and ashore, that were different from those of the wider seafaring community.

Within the wider seafaring community, differences in needs largely reflected age, family circumstances and income rather than industry sector. However, a general hierarchy of needs emerged, with fishermen having more and greater needs related to poverty, debt and ill-health, and Naval Service personnel relatively fewer and lesser, reflecting their stable conditions of service. Among merchant seafarers, ratings had more and greater needs than officers. Needs common to both UK and non-UK seafarers were connected to working conditions, information and advice, and support for family relationships.

Not surprisingly, dependants and families who had experienced marriage break-up, bereavement, disability or unemployment, and those living in single parent households, had more and greater needs than others regardless of industry sector. Dependants and families of fishermen felt less isolated than those of other seafarers, reflecting the strength of local fishing communities and absences at sea that were often shorter than in the other sectors.

Differences in need among older seafarers and dependants seem to reflect the nature of their working lives and the hierarchy of needs during working life applies in retirement: former fishermen have more and greater needs than former Naval personnel, and Merchant Navy ratings have more and greater needs than officers.

None of these findings are surprising. They are valuable in indicating common ground across industry sectors and population groups as well as the areas of greatest need. This information can give the maritime charities confidence in the value of shared approaches to developing support and common standards for services. The hierarchy of needs suggests where resources should be targeted.

In general, needs in the seafaring community differ from other occupational communities, including:

- ☛ lower incomes
- ☛ greater isolation
- ☛ a higher incidence of ill-health
- ☛ a higher incidence of debt, especially among younger people
- ☛ a higher incidence of poverty among older people, families and children
- ☛ a higher incidence of bereavement and need for support, especially among younger dependants and families
- ☛ a greater need for support with family or relationship issues, especially among younger adults.

These characteristics conceal variations and not all seafarers had these needs, but the pattern highlights where maritime charities, and general public and voluntary services, should target their resources to best respond to needs.

3.3 Needs and aspirations

3.3.1 Older seafarers and dependants

The impact of seafaring lifestyles in later life gives rise to specific needs for older seafarers and dependants, including:

- ☛ social isolation and a wish to have contact with other seafarers, particularly for those who are single
- ☛ individual and household poverty
- ☛ poor health
- ☛ self-reliance and autonomy, reflected in a reluctance to seek help and a desire to remain independent in their own homes in later life.

Existing services that deal with these needs should continue – including regular and one-off grants which should be developed to recognise the value of higher incomes in reducing social isolation. Seafarer-specific services are likely to be appreciated by older seafarers but all services should promote links with both local and seafaring communities.

3.3.2 Working age seafarers

When asked why they work at sea, seafarers emphasise the mixing of working and non-working life, camaraderie and self-reliance. For some seafarers, career prospects and travel are also important and actually being at sea is important to all seafarers.

The most significant concerns reported by working seafarers, in descending order of frequency, were:

- ☛ fatigue and long working hours
- ☛ lack of information and advice
- ☛ the need for health care services in order to return or continue to work at sea
- ☛ inadequate preparation for retirement
- ☛ lack of support for family and personal relationships
- ☛ financial problems, including access to benefits and advice on money matters and debt
- ☛ lack of training, career development or re-training
- ☛ lack of access to long-term housing and accommodation.

Maritime charities can address these needs through a range of interventions including:

- ☛ support for implementation of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Maritime Labour Convention 2006⁵

⁵ This ILO Convention defined a global labour charter for seafarers (excluding those working on fishing vessels or traditional ships).

- ☐ information and advice services that deal with work, personal and household problems, including family break-up, ill-health, stopping work at sea and, for Naval Service families, the impact of geographical moves within the Service
- ☐ initiatives to support healthy lifestyles at sea and ashore, and to provide access to timely health screening, diagnoses, care and treatment
- ☐ information and practical help to plan for retirement
- ☐ money advice and financial help to reduce poverty and debt
- ☐ resettlement services to enhance employment prospects after leaving work at sea, particularly for fishermen and merchant seafarers
- ☐ providing or securing access to long-term housing, particularly for seafarers of all ages who are single.

3.3.3 *Dependants and families of working age seafarers*

The impact of seafarers' lifestyles on some families and households are reflected in pressing needs for:

- ☐ emotional support, particularly after bereavement and in dealing with ill-health, disability, unemployment and family break-up
- ☐ parenting support, particularly for single-parent households
- ☐ information, advice and help with family relationships, including contact with non-resident parents
- ☐ financial support and money advice to deal with poverty and debt, particularly for single parents and fishing families
- ☐ access to training and employment, including help with childcare, particularly for women who are single parents.

Charities need to develop comprehensive support services that respond to these needs. Seafarer-specific services are likely to be less important to dependants and families than to seafarers themselves, but an understanding of seafaring lifestyles in general services is still important. Maritime charities can increase access to resources by dependants and families by supporting access to general services and by offering services directly. Initiatives could include:

- ☐ raising awareness of seafaring in relevant general services
- ☐ comprehensive assessments of needs that "signpost" various ways to access resources
- ☐ charity case workers directly supporting dependants and families in gaining access to general services
- ☐ partnerships to promote access to services such as bereavement support and debt advice
- ☐ financial support to boost family income and to help pay for training and childcare.

3.3.4 *Young people in maritime youth groups*

Young people face difficulties in gaining direct experience of maritime work and a lack of opportunities for training and skills development.

Maritime charities can support young people in developing maritime interests and careers by providing grants to groups and individuals for training and skills development and supporting access to career development and work experience.

3.4 *Looking ahead to future needs*

The research findings suggest that patterns of need are likely to remain broadly the same despite the falling number of people in the seafaring community. Changes in public policy may reduce some needs in the way that, for example, pension credits and government action on child poverty has raised the income of the poorest households. But the nature of the seafaring community means it is likely to have significantly different needs from the rest of the population for the foreseeable future.

Where needs exist, the most pressing now, and in the future, are related to:

- ☐ poverty, including problems with debt, benefits, pensions, low incomes and social exclusion
- ☐ isolation, including the need for seafarer-sensitive and seafarer-specific services

- ☐ information and advice on finding and using available services and resources to meet needs
- ☐ healthcare, including access to diagnosis, care and treatment, and preventative initiatives to reduce the likelihood or impact of ill-health
- ☐ emotional and parenting support for families and dependants
- ☐ long-term housing of a high standard for single seafarers of all ages.

These needs do not affect all seafarers, nor are they evenly distributed across the seafaring community. The greatest needs are found among fishermen, single-parent households (especially widows with children) and retired seafarers who are single. Among young people involved in maritime youth groups, needs are mainly related to career development for work at sea or on shore.

4 CONCLUSIONS: MARITIME CHARITIES WORKING WITH THE SEAFARING COMMUNITY

The research findings show that where charities are supporting people from the seafaring community, the level and complexity of their needs are in most cases greater than those in comparable occupational or population groups. It is clear that support from charities makes a positive difference to people's lives. However, low levels of awareness of maritime charities within the seafaring community and lower levels of use inevitably mean that people who could benefit from charitable support are not receiving it.

The research also identified where maritime charities need to embrace new initiatives and new ways of working if they are to respond effectively to the needs identified by the research.

4.1 Direct action across the sector on a range of issues

As detailed in section 3.4 above, the research found six priority areas of need:

- ☐ poverty
- ☐ isolation
- ☐ information and advice
- ☐ healthcare
- ☐ emotional and parenting support
- ☐ housing for seafarers who are single.

Charities should give priority to interventions that may prevent or reduce the likelihood of these needs arising, including:

- ☐ debt and money advice services
- ☐ support for re-settlement after leaving the sea
- ☐ health promotion and the prevention of ill-health.

Resources are likely to be used most effectively if charities collaborate to develop suitable responses.

4.1.1 Poverty

Maritime charities should continue to provide financial support to individuals and families in need, with priority being given to people who face the greatest risk of poverty and debt. Support should include:

- ☐ regular and one-off grants, to the maximum level possible, to be processed and paid quickly
- ☐ grants to provide practical assistance or social support, including white goods, transport, recreation and leisure activities
- ☐ grants for re-training and resettlement after leaving work at sea, particularly for people with long-term illnesses or disabilities
- ☐ support access to money advice and debt management counselling services that are sensitive to the seafaring community
- ☐ support to access statutory benefits
- ☐ preparation for retirement.

In providing this support charities should build on existing initiatives to share:

- ☐ application forms
- ☐ information protocols
- ☐ registers of applicants
- ☐ support for individuals and families in need.

4.1.2 *Isolation*

Maritime charities should recognise that regular and one-off grants can help reduce social isolation. Charities should consider supporting seafarer-specific initiatives, such as social events or groups and seafarers' housing, to reduce isolation. Where capital investment is required, this should be planned to ensure services have a suitable lifespan.

Charities should consider how communications technology could reduce isolation through such initiatives as web-based seafarer groups, chat rooms and other facilities for seafarers and their families to support each other.

4.1.3 *Information and advice*

Existing information and advice services, such as the International Seafarers' Assistance Network (ISAN) and the Seafarers' Benefits Advice Line (SBAL) should be more widely promoted. SBAL should be extended to support more organisations that work with seafarers, including unions, benefits offices and charities, and more one-to-one work with members of the seafaring community.

Seafarers from outside the UK have a particular need for information and advice when visiting UK ports. Clear information about charitable and public support for them should be available at ports and on ships, building on information produced by the MNWB.

4.1.4 *Healthcare*

Working seafarers need timely access to diagnosis, care and treatment in order to return or continue to work at sea. To develop an effective strategy for this, further research is needed to assess the health needs of seafarers employed in the merchant and fishing sectors and how the NHS and other services can best meet those needs.

Because the health of former seafarers is affected by their working lives, charities should support preventative and health promotion initiatives that may reduce ill-health or accidents at work. These might include support for seafarers to improve their diet and fitness levels. Seafarer-specific health initiatives will continue to be needed, such as care for people with alcohol-related illnesses or musculo-skeletal injuries.

4.1.5 *Emotional and parenting support*

The research found that many younger merchant seafarers, and families and dependants of seafarers, had high levels of concern about family and personal relationships. Support should be available in particular circumstances, such as bereavement and relationship break-up, together with ongoing support for effective communication between working seafarers and their families. This support might best be provided by partnerships between maritime charities and organisations specialising in emotional and parenting support and by developing locally-based and pastoral work within communities, such as is provided by the Fishermen's Missions

4.1.6 *Housing for seafarers who are single*

Housing for seafarers must be of a high standard to meet regulatory requirements and seafarers' expectations. There is likely to be a continuing but declining need for long-term, seafarer-specific housing for a small number of single former and working seafarers. Partnerships with housing associations should be developed to make the most effective use of resources. Charities should consider developing shared-equity housing schemes that offer seafarers with low incomes affordable part-purchase arrangements.⁶

⁶ Shared equity housing is housing that is partly owned by the tenant and partly owned by the housing provider.

4.2 Better skills and knowledge in charities

Charities work in a complex environment where staff and trustees need to update their skills and knowledge continuously in the light of changes in the maritime industries, public policy, good practice and seafarers' needs and aspirations. Schemes for sharing expertise and information may help smaller charities meet these challenges. The following approaches should be considered.

☐ Common standards

Standards that meet regulatory requirements and conform to benchmarked good practice for services should be agreed across the sector and supported by common training and accreditation.

For example: charities providing housing and care in England would meet standards defined by the Housing Corporation, the Commission for Social Care Inspection and Social Care Institute for Excellence.

☐ Comprehensive assessments of need

Charities should develop a system to assess applicants using standard "tools" that are consistent with those used by general public services. This would both inform charities about their own support and enable them to refer people to general and maritime organisations without a need for multiple assessments.

For example: charities working with older people in England would use a shared assessment template corresponding to the Single Assessment Process used by public services.

☐ Case workers

Charities should develop "case working"⁷ systems as a way of supporting applicants and carrying out comprehensive assessments of their needs.

For example: case workers with children's charities would work with the family to assess individual and household needs and work with parents to access resources.

☐ Shared staff

Locally-based, trained staff working for different maritime charities could assess needs and support applicants to access local resources.

For example: a member of staff based in a port would work for several national and local charities to assess and support applicants.

Expertise that builds on existing work can also be extended, such as:

- ☐ the use of shared "agents" to assess applications
- ☐ the MNWB's working groups and register of applicants
- ☐ internal reviews of charity practices and resources.

4.3 Increasing collaboration and co-ordination in maritime charities' work

Collaboration aims to:

- ☐ simplify seafarers' access to support
- ☐ improve services
- ☐ make best use of charities' resources.

Action to support collaboration should build on existing approaches and might include the following initiatives.

⁷ Case workers are professionals who carry out holistic assessments of need. Case workers agree and undertake a number of tasks with and on behalf of individuals or families in order to address their needs. This may include advocacy, provision of services and liaison with statutory and voluntary organisations. Case working might be time limited. It always focuses on the needs of the individual or family.

- ☐ **Shared information**

A shared signposting function for applicants could provide information about sources of support and pass enquiries to appropriate charities or other organisations.
- ☐ **Shared assessments and decision making**

Shared approaches to assessing needs can support shared decision-making on support for individuals or families and inform the development of services by identifying patterns of need. Information-sharing protocols and systems, including a common register of applications and applicants such as that developed by the MNWB, would let charities share information and direct applicants to the most suitable resources.
- ☐ **Strategic reviews of services**

Some maritime charities offer similar services. Strategic reviews of services should map provision against the pattern of needs identified by the research and inform decisions about services across the seafaring community.
- ☐ **Leadership**

The MNWB's working groups enable charities to work together when dealing with similar issues by providing structures and systems that support collaboration and shared leadership. This approach is likely to continue to be helpful. Where a small number of charities are involved, one should usually take the lead in developing strategic reviews and service planning.
- ☐ **Co-ordination of local services**

Port Welfare Committees already co-ordinate local ship and port-based welfare services for working seafarers of all nationalities. These may be developed at national, local and regional levels into the "welfare boards" envisaged in the ILO Maritime Labour Convention 2006.
- ☐ **Raising awareness**

Given the strong sense of self-reliance felt by many seafarers, maritime charities should promote themselves as 'seafarers working for seafarers'. Information should be disseminated through both informal and formal routes, including unions, the Fishermen's Mission, seafarer centres and ship visitors, RNcom⁸, general organisations and the media. Outside the maritime sector, a targeted programme is needed to raise awareness among general services of seafarers' circumstances and the roles of maritime charities.

4.4 *Stronger partnerships with other organisations*

Maritime charities need to work with maritime and other organisations to ensure that general services are more relevant and sensitive to seafarers' needs. This may involve:

- ☐ targeted work with local organisations in areas where large numbers of seafarers live
- ☐ influencing at national level public policies and practices that affect seafarers' lives
- ☐ partnerships to develop services that meet seafarers' needs
- ☐ work with maritime organisations such as unions and employers to increase awareness of seafarers' needs.

Charities should give priority to developing and supporting services that meet the needs of most concern to seafarers: poverty, isolation, information and advice, healthcare, emotional and parenting support and long-term housing for seafarers who are single.

Charities' work with other organisations might include:

- ☐ partnership arrangements between maritime charities and debt counselling or money management services to support seafarers

8 RNcom is the web based information portal for the Royal Navy.

- ☛ housing schemes involving partnerships between maritime charities and housing associations
- ☛ providing information about seafaring to general services that support family relationships, parenting and bereavement counselling, and promoting these services in the seafaring community
- ☛ partnerships to provide effective healthcare services for seafarers.

4.5 Information for charities

There is limited research or publicly-available data about the seafaring community. Maritime charities need to access the data already available and encourage public and industry bodies to gather, analyse and share information routinely and systematically on the demographic profile of the community and the different industry sectors.

The following data should be routinely collected, analysed and shared with charities:

- ☛ numbers and nationalities of non-UK seafarer visits to the UK by port, building from records of crew lists
- ☛ the demographic profile of merchant seafarers in employment, such as developed in the annual Seafarer Statistics prepared by the Centre for International Transport Management for the Department for Transport
- ☛ the demographic profile of fishermen in employment
- ☛ industry sector profiles of turnover and wastage rates.

Maritime charities may be well placed to support or collaborate with research into lifestyles, needs or aspirations within the seafaring community.

Of most immediate relevance would be research into:

- ☛ the health needs of working seafarers and service responses, including a strategic review of NHS and other provision for working and former seafarers
- ☛ the needs of black and minority-ethnic seafarers and former seafarers living in the UK
- ☛ the resettlement needs of former seafarers who are under the usual retirement age.

5 NEXT STEPS

The MCFCG is committed to supporting charities taking action on the research findings and recommendations. Discussion of the research findings and recommendations will involve the 2007 conference Supporting Seafarers and subsequent discussions by staff and trustees in individual charities and sector-wide or service-focused groups. The MCFCG will also share the findings as widely as possible with organisations outside the maritime charity sector so they can better understand and respond to needs in the seafaring community.

SECTION B

Older seafarers and dependants

1 INTRODUCTION

Over 1,100 older seafarers⁹ and dependants, and 20 maritime charities, contributed to this part of the research programme. Researchers used postal surveys, focus groups and telephone interviews to collect comprehensive information on the needs, aspirations, lives and lifestyles of seafarers and their dependants in retirement. The findings were considered alongside public policy affecting older people, and other research about seafarers and older people in general.¹⁰

The research was concerned with the wellbeing of older seafarers and dependants – their ability to enjoy good health, dignity and decent lifestyles. The findings provide a framework that maritime charities can use to understand better the needs and aspirations of older seafarers and dependants, and to develop appropriate responses to them.

The clear and consistent pictures that emerge from the research suggest that maritime charities can be confident the findings are representative of all older seafarers and dependants.

CASE STUDY 1

After 55 years at sea, this former merchant seafarer retired to a remote area of Wales. Now, aged 88 and following the death of his wife, he feels isolated and lonely while deteriorating health, sight and memory are making it harder for him to maintain his home and manage his life. Above all, he wants to live among people who have similar experiences of life and work at sea, so that he has people around him with similar experiences with whom to share memories.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 Demography

The lack of publicly-accessible data about seafarers and their dependants was a stumbling block for all aspects of the research programme. Data gathered for this area of the research was used in conjunction with assumptions drawn from national household profiles and other relevant research (see Figures B1 to B3 overleaf).

⁹ For the purposes of this report, “older seafarers” are defined as people who used to work in the maritime industries and are over the usual age of retirement in the industry in which they used to work. Although this is often 45 in the Naval Service, those aged 45 to 60 are considered to be of working age and only those aged over 60 are considered in the research summarised here. In the Merchant Navy the retirement age is considered to be 62 and in fishing, 60.

¹⁰ The research summarised here was commissioned by the Maritime Charities Funding Group and undertaken by Insight Social Research and ORS. Electronic copies of the full report are available from the Merchant Navy Welfare Board.

FIGURE B1: CURRENT & PROJECTED NUMBERS OF OLDER SEAFARERS 2005-20

	Total (range)	Naval Service	Merchant Navy	Fishing
2005	447-485,000	360-390,000	60-65,000	27-30,000
2010	382-395,000	280-300,000	60-70,000	32-35,000
2015	323-350,000	220-240,000	70-75,000	33-35,000
2020	285-315,000	190-210,000	70-75,000	25-30,000

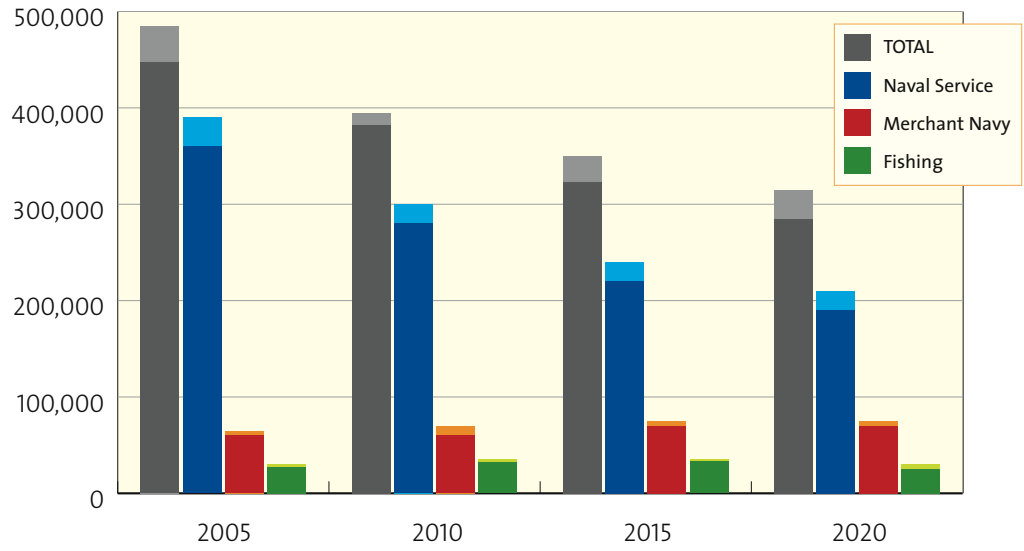


FIGURE B2: CURRENT & PROJECTED NUMBERS OF OLDER DEPENDANTS 2005-20

	Total (range)	Naval Service	Merchant Navy	Fishing
2005	215-232,000	170-180,000	30-35,000	15-17,000
2010	177-190,000	135-140,000	30-35,000	12-15,000
2015	158-173,000	110-120,000	33-36,000	15-17,000
2020	135-146,000	90-95,000	33-36,000	12-15,000

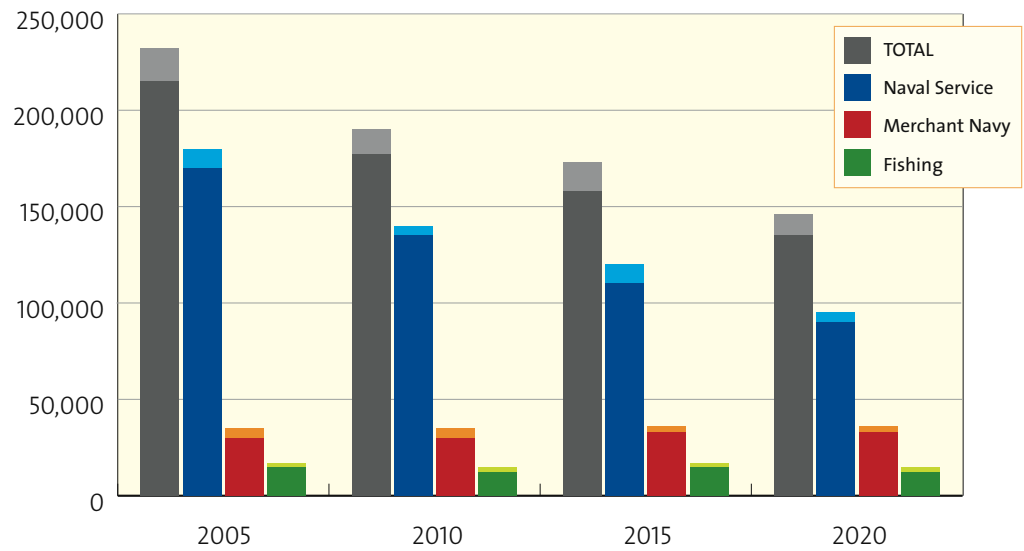


FIGURE B3: THE OLDER SEAFARING COMMUNITY 2005-20

	Total (range)	Naval Service	Merchant Navy	Fishing
2005	662-717,000	530-570,000	90-100,000	42-47,000
2010	554-595,000	415-440,000	95-105,000	44-50,000
2015	481-523,000	330-360,000	103-111,000	48-52,000
2020	420-461,000	280-305,000	103-111,000	37-45,000

Variations in the numbers of older seafarers reflect the different structures of the three industry sectors, particularly the falling number of seafarers who served in the Naval Service during and immediately after World War Two¹¹. Thus the number of former Naval Service personnel aged over 60 is expected to fall by around 40% by 2015 and 47% by 2020. The number of older fishermen is expected to rise by around 15% to 2015 and then start to fall, reflecting continuing loss of employment in the industry. The increase of 15% in the number of older merchant seafarers by 2020 directly reflects the age profile of the current workforce. The changing numbers of older dependants reflect the age ranges of older seafarers in the different sectors. The greatest change is expected among Naval Service dependants.

The population of the United Kingdom is ageing and most older people enjoy longer and healthier lives than in the past. However, because many health and social care needs increase with age, and people aged over 80 have the greatest need for health and social care, more services will be needed to respond to the ageing population. As with the general population, the number of seafarers aged over 80 will increase, in absolute terms and as a proportion of older seafarers, over the next 20 years.

Seafarers are more likely to be single in older age than the general population because of their relatively low marriage rates. They may feel greater isolation after leaving work at sea and receive less support from family carers than older people in other occupational groups. Most seafarers clearly value – and miss – the camaraderie of their working lives and this contributes to feelings of isolation and loneliness in retirement.

2.2 Policy

Public policy aims to encourage and support older people’s independence by supporting services that:

- ☐ increase social and economic activity among older people, including reductions in transport costs and support for employment after usual retirement ages
- ☐ provide care and support in older people’s own homes, including the use of communications technologies and the development of “extra-care”¹² housing and domiciliary care services.

Across the UK the public policy framework for older people is set by the reports *Opportunity Age*, *Ageing in an Inclusive Society*, and the White Paper *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say* and supported by the National Service Framework for Older People in England, the developing strategies for older people in Wales and Scotland, and in Northern Ireland by *A Healthier Future*, which sets out a 20-year vision for health and wellbeing to 2025. Across the UK the public policy framework supports increasing independence in older age.

3 RESEARCHING OLDER SEAFARERS AND THEIR DEPENDANTS

This research programme used the five methods described below to gather information about the needs and aspirations of older seafarers and dependants, supported by a review of existing published research.

11 See research by the Working Lives Research Institute, Section C of this report.
 12 Extra-care housing is a description of housing schemes that provide a range of care and support services greater than that available in sheltered housing and tailored to respond to individual need.

3.1 Telephone interviews with maritime organisations

18 organisations were contacted to find out about their experiences of working with older seafarers and dependants.

3.2 Focus groups with older seafarers and dependants

Nine focus groups, involving 91 older seafarers and dependants from the Naval Service, the Merchant Navy and the fishing industry, were held in eight locations around England.

3.3 A postal survey

2,400 questionnaires were sent to former seafarers aged over 60. The high response rate of 41% and analysis of these and other findings show that maritime charities can be confident the findings are relevant to older seafarers in general. Researchers used the responses to describe the demographic profile of older seafarers and the key issues affecting their lives and those of their dependants.

3.4 A local study

14 older seafarers living in South Wales were interviewed and provided additional insights into the issues raised by other methods.

3.5 Comparisons with other research

The research findings were compared with research commissioned by NUMAST Welfare Funds in 1997 into the welfare needs of Merchant Navy seafarers aged over 50, and with research commissioned by the Royal British Legion in 2005-6 into the needs of ex-Service personnel. These comparisons indicated trends in seafarers' needs and aspirations, and in responses from maritime charities.

4 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The research findings showed that seafaring lives have a continuing impact on life in retirement and highlighted issues that particularly affect older seafarers and dependants.

4.1 Isolation and loneliness

Many older seafarers and dependants experienced feelings of isolation and loneliness. These experiences reflected losses commonly associated with older age in general, and others particularly associated with seafaring lives. Seafarers missed contact with the sea, their working and living experiences onboard ship, and the camaraderie shared with colleagues.

Social relationships are known to be a key component of wellbeing. Support to increase social relationships may be especially important to older seafarers who emphasise their experiences of isolation from others and the difficulty of making the transition between life at sea and life ashore. Older seafarers described the particular loneliness resulting from the loss of personal identity associated with seafaring, from high levels of disability and long-term illness, and, for many, from the experience of poverty.

Social isolation appeared to be particularly prevalent for the many older seafarers who are single (11% of survey respondents compared to 7% of all older people in the UK) and for those who were poor.

The research shows that older fishermen felt less isolated and, despite their often long careers at sea, found the transition to retirement less difficult than other seafarers. This is likely to reflect their shorter absences at sea, especially in later life, and the historic concentration of fishing in local communities with extensive and well-developed social networks and often the embedded role of Fishermen's Missions. These networks have offered links to families and colleagues that often continue after retirement. Looking ahead, the wider dispersal of fishing and the decline of long-standing fishing ports suggests that isolation may become more significant.

4.2 Poverty

Income is as varied among seafarers as in any other group of older people. Not surprisingly, poverty is more commonly found among former ratings than former officers, and among former seafarers who are single. With official figures showing that 17% of all older people live in poverty, older seafarers and dependants, in general, appear to be less poor than other occupational groups. However, the averages for all seafarers inevitably conceal hardship for some. The research findings particularly emphasise the relative poverty of fishermen:

- ☐ only 14% of older fishermen who responded to the survey received a pension in addition to the state pension, compared to 45% of all older seafarers and 49% in the general population
- ☐ 8% of older fishermen who responded received income from savings compared to 25% of all older seafarers
- ☐ 11% of older fishermen who responded had savings of over £6,000, compared to 54% of older merchant seafarers and 66% of older Naval Service personnel.

Pension Credits have increased many older people's income, but this has been shown to be insufficient for emergencies or social activities. Of all seafarers responding to the survey, 26% received Pension Credit, slightly more than the proportion of UK pensioners as a whole (25%), while 24% said they found it 'difficult or very difficult to make ends meet' compared to 26% of all people in the UK aged over 60.

Significant debts were reported by 14% of survey respondents. Among older people, debt particularly affected people aged between 60 and 64, those who had been fishermen and those who had separated or divorced. This proportion is lower than the UK average for all households (16%) but higher than for all ex-Service households (5%).

4.3 Health

Most older seafarers and dependants (82%) reported poor health. This is a far higher proportion than among older people generally in the UK (33% for those aged between 65 and 74, and almost 50% for those aged over 75), and among older ex-Service personnel (54%).

For some, ill-health is likely to be at least partly a result of their working lifestyles. But it was conspicuous in the research that, with the exception of fishermen (who report the highest incidence of ill-health), older dependants and relatives also reported a wide range of health problems.

In parallel research about the needs of working age seafarers, it became clear that older seafarers make extensive use of priority NHS services¹³. In a survey of recent patients using NHS care via the Dreadnought Medical Service, 57% of respondents were aged over usual retirement age¹⁴ and 69% of those respondents had used Dreadnought while and since working. Many had used the service repeatedly (43% had used it more than three times) and this may reflect both the high proportion of all survey respondents who lived relatively near the London base of the Dreadnought service, and the significance of past employment on ships using the Thames ports.

4.4 Housing

Like the older population in general, most survey respondents (56%) were home owners. But the proportion of seafarers owning their own homes is lower than the UK averages for single pensioners (58%) and for pensioner families (81%). Single ex-Merchant Navy ratings were the least likely to own their homes. Like the general population few respondents wanted to move house and, unlike ex-Service personnel, most found their home and garden manageable. Fishermen were least likely to want to move. If a move was felt to be necessary, a sheltered housing scheme for seafarers was the most popular option (45%).

¹³ The survey of Dreadnought patients formed part of research undertaken by the Working Lives Research Institute at London Metropolitan University and is fully reported in their work. See Section C.

¹⁴ Patients' dates of birth indicate that, in 2005-6, 39% of Dreadnought patients were aged over 62, the usual retirement age in the Merchant Navy.

The range of accommodation options available for older people can be confusing, especially when care services are also needed. Older seafarers and dependants increasingly need information and advice about housing options which is informed by a comprehensive and professional assessment of their needs. Some older seafarers may need information, advice and support to secure long-term housing, especially when leaving work at sea or after changes in family relationships.

Seafarer-specific housing, that can build on camaraderie and reduce social isolation, may be especially important for single seafarers. But the fact that few older seafarers want to move from their current home needs to be taken into account in deciding whether and where such housing should be provided. The small size of many existing almshouses makes them less popular with seafarers and increasingly unsustainable as accommodation specific to seafarers and/or their dependants. Care homes are used less frequently now, partly because of better community-based care services, but the number of older seafarers without family carers suggests there will be a continuing need for care homes that offer different levels of care, as well as seafarer-specific services that may be particularly valued by single seafarers. The research found that older seafarers are becoming more interested in sheltered housing and extra-care housing, which can offer substantial support to single people, and suggested that shared equity housing schemes may be of interest¹⁵.

4.5 Providing community services and support for social inclusion

The research showed that regular and one-off grants from maritime charities were important in supporting independence. Policy trends and seafarers' expectations will mean that financial and other support for independence will be increasingly important. Maritime charities could give further support for social inclusion and access to community-based care by using comprehensive needs assessments to define both needs and appropriate responses.

4.6 Knowledge of maritime charities

The research found that older seafarers and their dependants had little knowledge or understanding of maritime charities or the services they offer. But they shared the view that maritime charities should provide practical help, such as mobility aids and grants for essential items, to seafarers and their immediate families.

4.7 Information and advice

Throughout the research older seafarers and their dependants clearly showed their lack of awareness of available services and their need for information and advice on a range of issues. They preferred to find out about services and sources of support by word-of-mouth rather than on paper, suggesting that maritime charities need to promote themselves and the support they offer through local people and organisations in touch with older seafarers. At the same time, more comprehensive assessments of need should be used to identify needs and possible solutions, and provide support to people in accessing information.

4.8 New ways of working

The research found clear connections across the industry sectors and between the different needs and aspirations of older seafarers. This suggests maritime charities would benefit from using comprehensive assessments of applicants' needs to inform responses to individuals and service planning across different charities and sectors.

Regulatory standards, particularly for housing, health and social care, frame charity services and help to form people's expectations of service quality. The research found that seafarers have high expectations about service quality which are only likely to increase. Maritime charities will need to respond positively if they are to meet these expectations.

¹⁵ Extra care housing offers more support than sheltered housing, including on-site communal facilities and personal care packages. Shared equity housing is housing that is partly owned by the tenant and partly owned by the housing provider.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This research programme has significantly increased knowledge about older seafarers and their needs and aspirations, but maritime charities need continuously to review and assess the needs of potential beneficiaries to ensure they are responding effectively. This demands more and better data about older seafarers in general and, in particular, data to better understand the needs of older minority-ethnic seafarers.

5.1 *Demographic change*

The expected increase in the number of older seafarers over time reflects the general demographic trends towards an ageing population and longer life expectancy, as well as the age profile of the industry sectors. The number of older seafarers, and the extent of their needs, is unlikely to reduce substantially for at least 20 years but the number of former Naval Service seafarers will fall, while the number of former merchant seafarers and fishermen is expected to rise. This pattern will be important to maritime charities in planning their services.

5.2 *Welfare needs*

The demands on maritime charities will be influenced by trends in public policy and people's expectations, both of which now emphasise the need to support older people to remain independent in their own home. These trends are unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.

The most frequent and greatest welfare needs among all seafarers were related to isolation and loneliness, poverty and poor health. Housing needs were less common, but the potential for seafarer-specific schemes to reduce isolation and meet the needs of the substantial number of seafarers who are single is significant and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. High standards and the provision of long-term housing integrated with care services will be essential. The value of information and advice about housing, care and other resources and options for all older seafarers' needs is clear.

5.2.1 *Support for social inclusion*

Seafarers value the company of other seafarers and their working lives and lifestyles continue to be important in retirement. Maritime charities need to find ways to establish and maintain contact between older seafarers who are socially isolated, and should consider supporting practical initiatives that facilitate social inclusion, including providing services specifically for seafarers. Maritime charities should also recognise that financial support can reduce isolation and include this factor in defining eligibility criteria and levels of support for individuals.

Because older seafarers prefer to use informal networks and methods to gather information and advice, isolation can impede access to information. Maritime charities should ensure that seafarers are advised of suitable sources of help and advice.

5.2.2 *Reducing poverty*

Many older seafarers and their dependants, but especially ex-fishermen and former ratings, have low incomes. Many seafarers report difficulty in making ends meet, and it is likely that many more lack money for emergencies or social activities. Regular or one-off grants for older seafarers and dependants in need were important to those who received them, whether for practical support (such as grants for mobility aids) or to supplement income for daily living. Some older seafarers experienced debt and their needs for debt and money advice were largely unmet.

5.2.3 *Increasing access to healthcare and support*

Older seafarers had high levels of ill-health, which is likely to reflect the hazardous nature of their working lives, and initiatives to improve their access to healthcare would be welcomed. Trained charity staff and volunteers in contact with older seafarers may be able to offer information and support to access suitable services. Health promotion and preventative measures that may reduce hazards for working seafarers are likely to be important in reducing ill-health in later life.

5.2.4 *Community-based services*

Most older seafarers wanted to remain in their own homes, in line with the aim of current public policy. Community-based services offering a range of support are increasingly provided by public and voluntary organisations. Seafarers, particularly those who are single or isolated, need information and advice about what is available to meet their needs and how to make the best use of resources. Trained staff or volunteers in maritime charities may provide advice or guide applicants to suitable services. Maritime charities should develop ways of undertaking comprehensive assessments of need in order to support referrals to charity or other services.

5.2.5 *Innovation in housing*

All existing almshouses, sheltered housing and care homes for older seafarers should be reviewed against current public policy and regulatory standards. Where demand is falling, these reviews are urgent. Where it is difficult to meet these standards, maritime charities may make best use of their resources by working with specialist housing providers. Such collaboration will also be important in developing housing options specifically for seafarers. Seafarers show interest in extra-care and sheltered housing and shared ownership schemes, possibly specifically for seafarers. Such provision would extend their housing options, support independence and reduce loneliness, especially among seafarers who are single. There is a potential market for shared-ownership schemes.

As the number of older seafarers is likely to fall steadily after about 2030, capital investment in housing schemes for older people would be most efficient if made before about 2010 (assuming a 25-year life for new building projects).

5.2.6 *Information and advice*

Older seafarers and dependants prefer to gather information from friends, colleagues and family members. These sources can be described as “trusted advisors” and a preference for their use is common among all older people. It will be important for information about social needs and responses to be disseminated through local organisations and people in contact with older seafarers.

5.3 *New ways of working*

The rapidly-changing context of public services means maritime charities need to keep abreast of changes in policy and practice in responding to older people’s needs and to be aware of variation across the UK. This means that maritime charities should take action in five linked areas of work.

5.3.1 *Knowledge*

It is essential that maritime charities continue to keep abreast of policy developments that affect their work and the lives of their potential beneficiaries.

5.3.2 *Partnership working*

Collaboration between maritime charities will make the best use of resources, with shared staff, information and expertise likely to prove fruitful. Protocols and systems that support shared information about applicants (such as the MNWB’s register of applicants) can support collaboration in responding to applications. Maritime charities that invest in partnerships with other organisations can make use of wider expertise and support to develop effective responses to older seafarers’ needs.

5.3.3 *Awareness of maritime charities and their work*

To reach older seafarers and dependants, charities need to ensure that information about their work is available in local communities and in a variety of forms, including through people who are in touch with older seafarers.

5.3.4 *Quality and standard of maritime charity services*

Rising expectations among seafarers and higher regulatory standards mean maritime charities will have to place still greater emphasis on the quality of the services they provide to older seafarers. These expectations are likely to increase further as a result of public policy support for increased independence, such as direct payments and “choice” in healthcare services.

5.3.5 *Assessment of applicants' needs*

Clear connections between the individual needs and aspirations of different groups of older seafarers demonstrate the value of introducing comprehensive assessments of applicants' needs to inform charity responses to individuals and provide information for maritime charities on how to improve services and fill service gaps. Assessments will be especially valuable if they are compatible with those used by public services.

OLDER SEAFARERS AND THEIR DEPENDANTS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1 Service development

1.1 Social inclusion

When defining financial support for older seafarers, maritime charities should recognise the importance of financial support to enable social inclusion.

Maritime charities should consider how best to support practical initiatives that may facilitate social inclusion and contact with and between seafarers. This might include the development of "befriending" schemes, use of internet-based approaches, support for social events or reunions and the provision of services that are specific or sensitive to seafarers. Support for social inclusion should be targeted at older merchant and Naval Service seafarers.

1.2 Reducing poverty

Maritime charities should continue to provide regular and one-off grants and other financial support to older seafarers and dependants in need. Older fishermen, ratings and their older dependants are likely to be the main recipients of support. Where possible, grants should be set at the maximum possible level and decisions should be made quickly.¹⁶

Priority should continue to be given to financial support for practical help such as one-off repairs or mobility aids.

Maritime charities should facilitate access to debt and money advice services by older seafarers by providing written information and advice, and by staff and volunteers directing applicants to suitable services. Such information should be targeted at former fishermen and ratings and follow a comprehensive assessment of the needs of each applicant.

Where money and debt advice services are offered to younger seafarers, their dependants and families (see page 60), ways in which these can support older seafarers should be investigated.

1.3 Healthcare and support

Maritime charities should support initiatives that improve older seafarers' access to healthcare and prevent or reduce health hazards during working life.

Particular attention should be given to extending the knowledge of staff and volunteers in contact with older seafarers (especially those who provide home visits), so they can provide information about healthcare and support options, including support to stay at home.

The role of the Dreadnought Medical Service in supporting older merchant and fishing seafarers should be considered as part of continuing work to map the health needs of serving merchant seafarers and fishermen and develop appropriate responses.

¹⁶ From 2 October 2006 certain charitable and voluntary payments of income are disregarded in full. See Social Security (Miscellaneous amendments) (number 4) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006 No. 2378).

1.4 *Community-based services*

Older seafarers should be helped to access local community-based services that can support their independence. This is likely to involve maritime charities working to raise awareness among general older people's organisations and to inform and advise older seafarers and their dependants of available services.

Maritime charity staff and volunteers, especially those who assess applications and visit people in their own homes, should be trained and supported to provide information and to signpost and support access to community-based services.

A system of comprehensive assessments of applicants' needs should be developed to identify the full range of seafarers' needs and to support access to suitable services and support.

1.5 *Housing*

Maritime charities that already provide seafarer-specific almshouses, supported housing and care homes should undertake regular reviews of housing and related community-based services that take account of:

- ☐ seafarers' needs and aspirations
- ☐ statutory frameworks
- ☐ staff skills and aptitude
- ☐ the possibility of reframing charitable objects to extend access to existing properties
- ☐ the potential of developing shared services with like-minded charities
- ☐ available housing expertise in other organisations.

While many reviews will be urgent, where there is evidence of diminishing demand they should be undertaken in a rational and timely manner. Reviews may indicate demand for new or refined services and closure of existing services.

The value of seafarer-specific housing lies in its support for social inclusion for older seafarers who are single or isolated. This will continue to be important, but demand is likely to fall after 2025 in line with reductions in UK seafarers.

Demographic trends suggest that housing with high levels of care will continue to be needed for older seafarers for the next 20 to 30 years, but that capital investment in such services should decline. Given the general 25-year lifespan of new buildings, such investment should only be planned in the short term. Demand for such services is relatively small and falling, as community-based services increase. Similarly, the need for supported housing (especially for single older seafarers) is likely to continue in the short term but fall later as their numbers decline.

Maritime charities should explore opportunities to develop partnerships with housing associations to provide management services for existing housing and to develop new extra-care or similar housing in key locations. In return for maritime charities' capital investment in such projects, a proportion of dwellings should be initially designated for older seafarers.

Maritime charities should explore the scope for shared-ownership schemes for older seafarers and the lessons learned should inform decisions about capital funding for new schemes.

Applicants for maritime charities' housing and other support should routinely be advised of options available in mainstream and seafarer-specific services, together with sources of information and advice.

2 **New ways of working**

2.1 *Knowledge within maritime charities*

It is essential that maritime charities continue to keep abreast of public policy developments as they affect older people.

Regular reviews of the demographic profile of older seafarers (and therefore of the seafaring community) will be required to enable maritime charities and other organisations to target and monitor interventions that respond to needs and opportunities.

Specific research should be undertaken in areas where there are black and minority-ethnic communities which owe part of their origins to seafaring, so the extent of needs among minority-ethnic older seafarers, and the role of maritime charities in meeting them, can be defined.

2.2 Partnerships

Maritime charities should explore the potential of new partnerships for delivering services across the sector. These should include partnerships between maritime charities and with non-maritime organisations that have expertise useful to seafarers. Such partnerships can increase effective responses to the needs of older seafarers and their dependants, and will also increase skills and expertise as charity staff and trustees learn more about service options from other perspectives and identify other benefits of collaboration.

2.3 Awareness of maritime charities

Maritime charities should work together to raise awareness of their roles among two audiences:

- ☒ national and local organisations that work with older people
- ☒ older seafarers and their dependants.

2.4 Quality and standards

Services must meet the standards required by regulators and those expected by older seafarers and their dependants. High-quality services are essential to ensure that seafarers make good use of charity services. Staff and trustees should continue to extend the knowledge and skills used in working with individual applicants and in providing services.

2.5 Assessment of needs

Key staff and volunteers, working locally with older seafarers, should be trained to assess needs and provide, where appropriate, onward referrals to other organisations for specialist assessments or support. All assessments should be compatible with those used by public services.

SECTION C

Working Age Seafarers¹⁷

1 INTRODUCTION

Over 1,200 seafarers and 24 maritime organisations contributed to the research on working age seafarers. A wealth of information about their needs, aspirations, lives and lifestyles was gathered using postal surveys, interviews and focus groups. The findings have been considered alongside public policy affecting working lives and other research about seafarers.¹⁸

The research concentrated on seafarers who were working or had worked in the fishing industry or the Merchant Navy, or who had worked in the Naval Service. Serving Naval personnel were not considered because their employment circumstances differ significantly from those in the other industries. The demographic profile of seafarers involved was similar to that of the maritime workforce as a whole, so maritime charities can be confident that the clear and consistent pictures that emerge from the research are relevant to all working age seafarers.

CASE STUDY 2

After a 40-year career at sea and approaching retirement, a dispute with his employer led this Captain to resign. After returning to Britain without work his marriage broke down, possibly as the result of long-term alcohol abuse. The divorce settlement left him homeless. Soon afterwards, a number of family bereavements exacerbated his personal problems and his alcohol abuse and debts escalated. He hoped to solve his financial problems through one last voyage, but was unable to find work.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 Demographics

As with the other areas of research, the lack of publicly-accessible data on the seafaring community proved a stumbling block for the research. Available data was used with assumptions drawn from national household profiles developed in the light of qualitative information drawn from this and other research.

Data and projections indicate that the number of people working at sea is falling (see Figure C1). In 2020, the number of UK seafarers will be around 66% of the workforce in 2005, with the largest fall in the number of Merchant Navy seafarers. The decline in the number of former seafarers is a little slower. In 2020 the number of former seafarers will be around 70% of the 2005 figure. This difference reflects labour turnover, in part a result of falling employment, and changes in periods of engagement. Across the industry sectors, the proportion of working and former Naval Service personnel will rise while the proportions of Merchant Navy seafarers and fishermen will fall.

¹⁷ For the purposes of this report, the term “working age seafarers” refers to seafarers under the usual retirement age for the industry in which they work, including those who have left work at sea, officer cadets and trainees. Usual retirement ages were defined as 62 for the Merchant Navy and 60 for the Naval Service and fishing.

¹⁸ The research summarised here was undertaken on behalf of the Maritime Charities Funding Group by the Working Lives Research Institute at London Metropolitan University. Electronic copies of the full report are available from the Merchant Navy Welfare Board.

FIGURE C1: CURRENT & PROJECTED NUMBERS OF WORKING UK SEAFARERS 2005-20

	Total (range)	Naval Service	Merchant Navy	Fishing
2005	75-81,000	35-37,000	27-29,000	13-15,000
2010	68-71,000	35-38,000	22-23,000	10-11,000
2015	57-62,000	32-36,000	16-18,000	8-8,500
2020	50-57,000	30-35,000	14-15,000	6-7,000

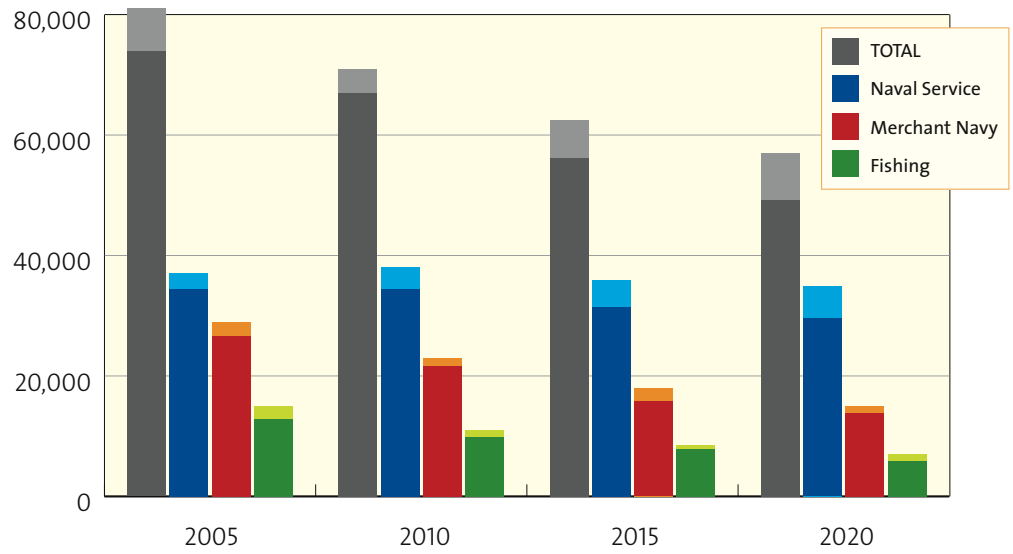


FIGURE C2: CURRENT & PROJECTED NUMBERS OF FORMER UK SEAFARERS OF WORKING AGE 2005-20

	Total (range)	Naval Service	Merchant Navy	Fishing
2005	260-272,000	170-175,000	63-67,000	27-30,000
2010	240-247,000	155-165,000	60-65,000	20-22,000
2015	210-227,000	150-160,000	45-50,000	15-17,000
2020	177-194,000	135-145,000	30-35,000	12-14,000

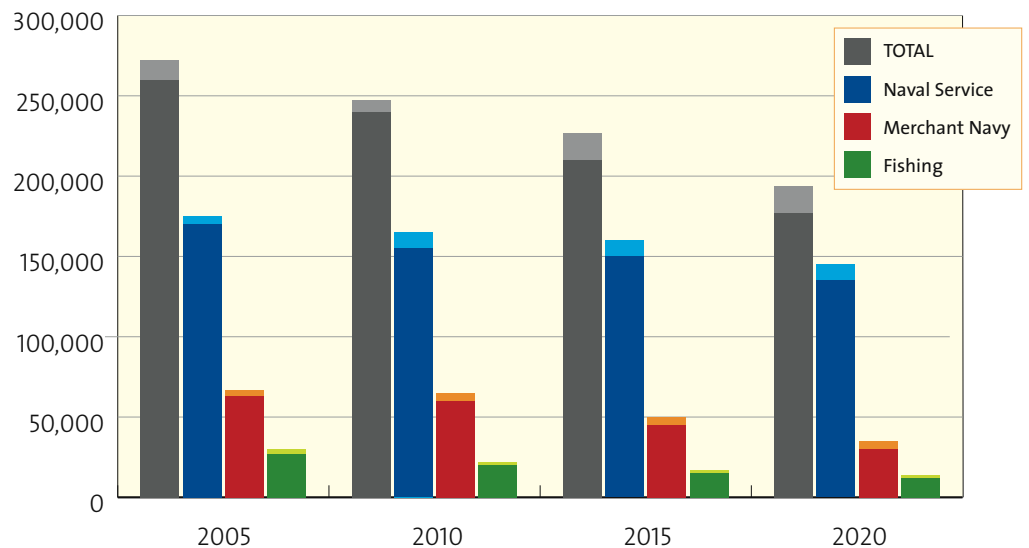


FIGURE C3: WORKING AGE SEAFARERS 2005-20

	Total (range)	Naval Service	Merchant Navy	Fishing
2005	335-353,000	205-212,000	90-96,000	40-45,000
2010	302-324,000	190-203,000	82-88,000	30-33,000
2015	266-289,000	182-196,000	61-68,000	23-25,000
2020	226-251,000	164-180,000	44-50,000	18-21,000

The number of women serving in the Naval Service and Merchant Navy is increasing but most seafarers are men. In the Merchant Navy, 90% of UK officers and 83% of UK ratings are men. DEFRA estimates that just 26 of the 12,600 fishermen in the UK are women.

The Merchant Navy workforce is older than in many other occupations and is the oldest of the three maritime sectors, with 66% of UK officers and 54% of UK ratings aged over 40 (DfT, 2006). The age profile of the Naval Service is younger, with 37% of officers and 13% of ratings aged over 40. A 2001 survey of fishermen suggests that only 33% are aged over 45 years¹⁹ but this is likely to conceal variation in the age of fishermen between different parts of the fishing fleets, jobs and boats.

2.1.1 Non-UK and UK seafarers

The worldwide supply of merchant seafarers in 2005 was estimated to be 466,000 officers and 721,000 ratings.²⁰ The workforce of UK and non-UK flagged merchant ships is multinational. The number of UK merchant seafarers is falling in absolute numbers and relative to other nationalities and the fall is sharpest among ratings. In 2002, 52% of officers on UK-flagged ships were from outside the UK (SIRC, 2002). In 2000, 33% of seafarers worldwide were from the Philippines (Glen, 2005). The OECD countries, and increasingly Eastern Europe, are important sources of officers. The Far East, South East Asia and the Indian sub-continent remain the largest source of ratings and are becoming key sources of officers. The Chinese workforce is increasing, most of whom work on the Chinese-owned fleet.²¹

Globally, UK seafarers make up 2.7% of the workforce but there is wide variation in the proportion of UK seafarers between ships (reflecting flag, ownership, tonnage and type of ship) and between officers and ratings. In 2005-6 an estimated 1% of officers and 20% of ratings on tonnage tax²² ships were UK seafarers.

Visits by non-UK seafarers to UK ports are of interest to maritime charities providing port-based and other welfare services. Local surveys of all seafarer centres suggest that the annual number of visits to centres by non-UK seafarers varies widely from 350 to 25,000, making up anything between 10% and 90% of all visitors. The limited data available about crew levels and nationalities on ships arriving in UK ports, and lack of information about whether crew leave their ships, make it impossible to arrive at firm figures of visiting seafarers. Analysis of the number of ships arriving in UK ports in the context of what is known about crew composition suggests that there may be between 5,000 and 6,000 non-UK seafarers arriving in UK ports each day. Some of these will be repeat visitors while some will not go ashore.

Falling numbers of UK fishermen are, anecdotal evidence suggests, concealing a trend towards increasing numbers of non-UK crew members.²³

2.1.2 Turnover

An annual wastage rate (including retirements) of 8.5% among officers and 9.5% among ratings

¹⁹ Matheson et al 2001 and related articles

²⁰ BIMCO/ISF Manpower 2005 update

²¹ BIMCO/ISF Manpower 2005 update

²² Tonnage Tax is a special corporation tax regime linked to training provision. Ships owned by UK tax resident companies may opt into this regime and, in exchange, must train some new cadets.

²³ Seafish Surveys are gathering data on nationality of fishing crews that will inform charity support for fishermen.

on merchant ships in OECD countries²⁴ suggests higher rates of turnover than in many other industries²⁵. Rapid turnover in some sections of the industry conceals long periods of service in others. 65% of merchant seafarers and 52% of fishermen who responded to the research surveys had served for over 20 years. Seafarers of working age leave the industry because of employment changes, personal or medical reasons. Research suggests that medical problems are the main reason for early retirement. The large number of former Naval Service personnel reflects the tendency towards shorter periods of engagement.

2.2 Working at sea

Health hazards, accidents and injury are common in the maritime industries. Seafarers need to be physically fit and, in the Merchant Navy, need a medical certificate to work at sea. Seafaring lifestyles are increasingly recognised as unhealthy and other research shows that obesity and poor fitness levels are increasing, along with increased social and emotional isolation onboard ships. These trends are likely to be linked to a mix of work and personal issues that include the nature of working and living at sea, often for long periods.

The working conditions of seafarers are documented and well known within the maritime industries, but poorly understood elsewhere. In 2006, the ILO adopted a new Maritime Labour Convention that defined a global labour charter for seafarers (excluding those working on fishing vessels and "traditional" ships). Implementing this should improve working lives. In the meantime, a range of research shows that seafarers' lives are clearly affected by some or all of the following issues.

- ☐ **Long hours, falling crew sizes, arduous and hazardous work**
Seafarers involved with the research ranked fatigue first in a list of ten causes for concern and said reduced crew sizes and increased workloads contributed to stress.
- ☐ **High rates of work and lifestyle-related deaths, accidents, disability and illness**
Seafarers are particularly prone to musculo-skeletal and alcohol-related conditions and obesity is increasing. But medical retirement patterns resemble those of the general working population in the UK. Other research²⁶ about older seafarers found higher rates of reported illness and disability among older seafarers than among older people in other occupational groups.
- ☐ **Separation from home and families while at sea and from colleagues while ashore**
Long periods of separation are an inevitable part of seafaring work and the impact in terms of relationship break-up, stress and anxiety was clear in this research and parallel research about seafarers' families.
- ☐ **A mix of camaraderie and isolation, at sea and ashore**
Long working hours, quick turn-around times in ports, smaller crew sizes, multinational crews and, on some merchant ships, limited socialising, all appear to have contributed to reduced social contact for seafarers onboard ship. This may be expected to exacerbate isolation ashore. Former seafarers miss the camaraderie of their work and lives at sea.
- ☐ **Lack of pension provision among merchant ratings and fishermen**
Research into older seafarers found low levels of pension provision among merchant seafarers and fishermen.
- ☐ **Limited training and career development opportunities**
Efforts to increase training for UK merchant seafarers are associated with the tonnage tax and, for fishermen, the introduction of certificated training for aspects of ship work.

24 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development: a group of 30 leading industrial nations.

25 BIMCO/ISF Manpower 2005 update

26 Commissioned by the MCFG and undertaken by Insight Social Research (Section B of this report)

CASE STUDY 3

A short-term medical condition prevented this serving merchant seafarer from working and meeting his financial commitments, but seemed to pose no long-term problem as a return to work at sea was in prospect. But his condition deteriorated and he was unable to return to sea without further treatment. His financial problems increased to the point that he faced loss of his home. His bank and mortgage provider were unsympathetic even though medical advice indicated that he would be able to return to active service after treatment. Fear of debt and the loss of his home also began to affect his health.

❶ Low pay

Pay rates within the industry are varied, and are characterised by very low rates for some seafarers, fluctuating annual income for fishermen, and high rates for some senior officers. Some research indicates that low wages and poor money management skills may result in poverty and debt during and after working life.

3 RESEARCHING WORKING AGE SEAFARERS

Four approaches to collecting new information about the needs and aspirations of working age seafarers were used in the research, supported by a review of published research about seafarers and comparisons with the wider population.

3.1 *Seafarer interviews*

Semi-structured personal interviews with 90 seafarers aged under 62 were undertaken in various local centres and by telephone. The sample drew from all three sectors of the maritime industry, from current and former seafarers, UK and non-UK seafarers and people who had some or no contact with maritime charities.

3.2 *Officer cadets' discussion group*

Four officer cadets at one college joined in a discussion group to consider their experiences of training and the issues about seafarers' working lives that had been raised in interviews with seafarers and maritime organisations.

3.3 *Organisation interviews*

Interviews were conducted with 24 organisations working with seafarers including charities, employers, unions and service providers.

3.4 *Questionnaire surveys*

Three separate questionnaire surveys were carried out:

- ❶ 3,359 questionnaires posted to a sample of 20% of Merchant Navy officers and ratings in the membership records of either Nautilus UK or the RMT. 817 completed responses were returned, a response rate of 24%, made up of 81% officers and 19% ratings, reflecting the larger number of working officers and a higher response rate by officers²⁷.
- ❶ 506 questionnaires posted to a 44% sample of patients admitted to St Thomas's or Guy's hospitals via the Dreadnought Medical Service in 2005 and 2006. 239 completed questionnaires were returned – a response rate of 47%. 35% of respondents were of working age, while 57% were over the usual age of retirement²⁸. The responses of working age seafarers were of particular interest to this research and have informed analysis, conclusions and recommendations.

²⁷ Numbers and percentages are affected by 38 nil responses to the question that defined officer or rating role.

²⁸ The remaining responses were from adult dependants or people working in shore-based industries.

- C 500 questionnaires distributed to fishermen in contact with Fishermen's Mission centres around the UK, with a response rate of 13%.

4 THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings reinforce and extend previous research on the challenges faced by seafarers in their working and home lives, and during transition from seafaring to work in other industries, retirement or unemployment. They show strong similarities between the experiences and needs of seafarers who have worked in fishing, the Merchant Navy or the Naval Service. Differences in experiences were more likely to be related to age, income and family circumstances than to industry sector. Drawing from the different research methods, nine key aspects of seafarers' lives were identified, as detailed below.

4.1 *Working lives*

Fatigue and long working hours were together ranked top of a list of ten concerns by respondents to the questionnaire surveys from the Merchant Navy and fishing fleets (identified by 58% and 54% respectively). Comments linked these concerns to heavy workloads, reduced crew sizes and skill shortages and, for Merchant Navy seafarers, dissatisfaction with life onboard, including poor food and few opportunities for socialising.

Of the Merchant Navy respondents, 32% had concerns about employment issues. Interviews found that problems at work were generally resolved informally, and there was a widespread view that many problems were best ignored. Where problems were tackled, union members and former Naval Service seafarers were, predictably, more likely to use the formal routes available to them.

CASE STUDY 4

After joining the Merchant Navy in 1973 as a boy, Mike worked in the engine room until suffering a hernia in 1997. During treatment he was diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis. He failed his medical certificate and had to leave the sea, losing his job and his way of life. Depression set in and after an 18-month drinking "bender", during which he ran up debts of £6,000, his doctor sent him on an anger management course and his wife gave him an ultimatum of getting on top of his life or leaving. Like many seafarers, he is reluctant to seek help.

4.2 *Information, advice and support*

All the seafarers participating in the research emphasised informal ways of finding information and resolving problems. A strong culture of self-reliance, pride in "coping" and a preference for using "word-of-mouth" information from trusted advisers (family, friends, work colleagues, chaplains and port superintendents) to deal with problems clearly emerged in the interviews. But these informal networks appeared to be stretched by changes in the industry, particularly reduced crew sizes, multinational crews and frequent changes in crew membership. This posed particular difficulties for non-UK seafarers in the UK, who had no contacts and no knowledge of the public or charitable support available to seafarers.

Only 3% of Merchant Navy respondents had looked to maritime charities for information or advice. Among fishermen, 61% had turned to charities, 86% of whom had approached the Fishermen's Mission. For non-UK seafarers, seafarers' centres, ship visitors and chaplains appeared to be their main sources of information in the UK. Some UK seafarers viewed seafarers' centres as part of the seafaring community and a source of information. The Fishermen's Missions and port superintendents were the primary source of information for fishermen, but specialist information and advice on self-employment, fishing and taxation was also sought elsewhere.

Former seafarers faced particular difficulties in accessing information, advice and support because they had lost their informal seafaring networks, often when they needed them most. Those who had served in the Naval Service missed access to service resources and support.

Among the range of information sources available to seafarers are seafarers' centres, Fishermen's Missions, the International Seafarers' Assistance Network (ISAN) and general resources such as the Citizens Advice service. Unions provide an additional resource for their members. In 1997, the particular needs of merchant seafarers and fishermen for information and advice about statutory benefits led to the development of the Seafarers' Benefits Advice Line (SBAL).

Limited access to information and advice, on benefits and other issues, is still a significant problem for seafarers: 39% of Merchant Navy and 30% of fishermen respondents had sought information or advice from any of a range of sources. While only 2% of Merchant Navy and 9% of fishermen respondents had used SBAL, interviews showed that those who knew about SBAL used it, found it helpful and valued its knowledge and understanding of seafarers' work and lives. But the surveys and interviews showed that very few seafarers used general sources of information and advice, like the Citizens Advice service or legal advisers, with fishermen and merchant ratings the least likely to use formal or general services.

4.3 Health, healthcare and rehabilitation

The interviews and survey responses showed the value and importance seafarers place on timely access to medical diagnosis and treatment and the high incidence of ill-health and disability among seafarers. Among respondents to the general surveys, 17% of merchant seafarers and 23% of fishermen were concerned about access to healthcare, while 32% and 47% needed medical care, and 23% and 29% needed rehabilitation, in order to return or continue to work at sea. Compared to other occupational groups seafarers have high levels of morbidity and mortality. Census data suggest that between 10% and 30% of the UK population have a limiting long-term illness and that rates increase with age. But studies of ex-Service veterans of all ages suggest a higher proportion of up to 50% are affected by a long-term illness or disability.

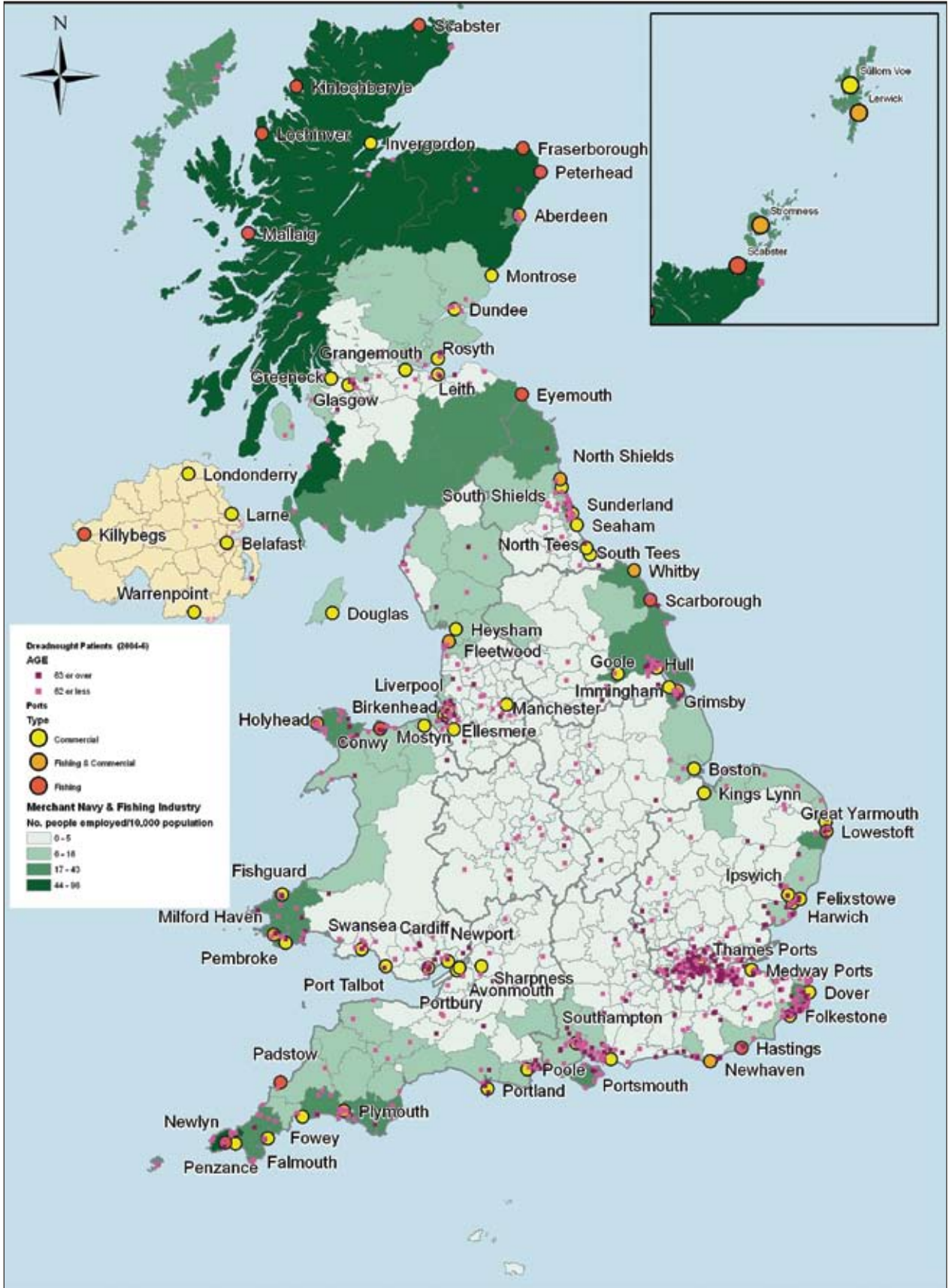
Few employers outside the Naval Service appeared to support seafarers' access to timely medical care or rehabilitation. The Dreadnought Medical Service based at Guy's and St Thomas' Trust provides priority access to NHS elective treatment for merchant seafarers and fishermen, so they can return or continue to work at sea and to meet the UK's international obligations for providing of healthcare to visiting seafarers. The survey of Dreadnought patients found that 70% of working age respondents used the service because it offered a quick service.

The Seamen's Hospital Society and the unions have reservations about the ability of Dreadnought to meet the needs of working seafarers. Improvements in NHS waiting times and treatments, and the London base of Dreadnought, mean that many seafarers may access treatment more quickly in their local NHS. The general surveys showed that local NHS services were widely used – by 63% of Merchant Navy and 70% of fishermen respondents. Half of the fishermen responding said that they had only been offered local NHS care, compared to 24% Merchant Navy respondents. The survey found that the home addresses of working age Dreadnought patients did not correspond to the geographical distribution of ports or where working seafarers live (see Figure C4 overleaf). Only 7% of working age respondents to the Dreadnought survey were fishermen. This contrasts sharply with fishermen's expressed need for care and is reflected in their higher use of local NHS services.

CASE STUDY 5

An emergency arising from a medical examination and an ECG by the ship's doctor sent Kerry ashore where she was diagnosed first with high blood pressure and then with a disabling congenital heart condition which had not been diagnosed. Within a few weeks she had a heart and lung transplant operation. Permanent lung damage and related health problems mean she is no longer fit to work at sea.

FIGURE C4: DISTRIBUTION OF DREADNOUGHT PATIENTS 2005-6
in relation to the distribution of seafarers employed in the Merchant Navy and fishing industry by postcode and census



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Only 7% of working age respondents to the Dreadnought survey were covered by private health insurance, but 8% had used private healthcare services. Among general survey respondents, private hospital care was more widely used – by 32% of Merchant Navy and 12% of fishermen respondents – while private rehabilitation services were used by 35% and 14% respectively. It is likely that seafarers who can quickly access NHS services via Dreadnought are less likely to seek private healthcare.

4.4 *Planning and preparation for "retirement"*

The general surveys showed that 30% of Merchant Navy and 41% of fishermen respondents were concerned about inadequate preparation for retirement. More officers (32%) than ratings (24%) reported concerns and unsurprisingly concerns increased with age.

Interviews found that employers gave very little information to seafarers on planning for retirement – such information was almost wholly confined to the Naval Service and UK Merchant Navy officers working for large employers. Interviews also revealed that few seafarers outside the Naval Service had adequate pension provision. Together, these findings suggest that almost one in three seafarers will not receive a personal or employer's pension and, for those who do, provision appears limited. Other research for the MCFG²⁹ found that 45% of former merchant seafarers and 15% of former fishermen surveyed received a pension in addition to the state pension. Some seafarers said that continuing to work for as long as possible – at sea or ashore – would be the only way to make ends meet in retirement.

4.5 *Support for family life*

Among Merchant Navy respondents, 29% had concerns about family, marriage and relationship issues – placing such concerns fourth in a list of ten. Interviews found that non-UK seafarers' long tours of duty posed particular difficulties for family life. Fewer fishermen (18%) had relationship concerns, reflecting their shorter periods at sea and more local support for families in fishing communities.

All the seafarers involved in the research recognised that separation from families was "part of the job", and cadets realised that long absences would make family life hard to sustain. Some had ceased to work at sea because of family problems, while others had experienced family break-up because of frequent absences from home. Many seafarers recognised that they needed support with family issues and informal networks of colleagues and friends were the main source of this.

4.6 *Money, debt and benefits*

In the general surveys, 13% of UK Merchant Navy ratings, 7% of officers and 36% of fishermen reported concerns about debt, and interviews highlighted debt concerns among former Naval Service personnel during and after service. Around 17% of all UK households live in poverty³⁰ but some 33% of UK adults have significant debts.³¹ Poverty and debt are concentrated among people aged under 34, households without work and households with children.

Across the maritime industries, debt most affected fishermen and seafarers who:

- ☐ had short periods of service
- ☐ were aged under 35
- ☐ had experienced marriage or relationship break-up
- ☐ had poor health or a disability.

Interviews suggested that debt most often stemmed from illness or accidents that had prevented seafarers from working at sea. Among fishermen, debt often resulted from periods of poor catches and difficulties in planning and making tax payments. For merchant seafarers, poor money management skills were part of the problem, reflecting alternating periods at sea and ashore, and limited experience of household budgeting.

²⁹ Research about older seafarers and their dependants by Insight Social Research. See Section B

³⁰ Poverty is defined as living on an income that is less than 60% of median disposable income.

³¹ Debts that cannot be paid off at the end of the month.

Non-UK seafarers reported fewer concerns about debt than UK seafarers. For those with concerns, debt was often the result of supporting families at home or lack of pay between contracts. Many non-UK seafarers interviewed said that seafaring offered better pay than other work, so debt was likely to be less of a problem than for UK seafarers.

Former seafarers experienced particular difficulties with debt and access to statutory benefits, as a result of inadequate National Insurance (NI) contribution records, poor pension or sick pay arrangements, lack of pay between contracts and insufficient information about benefit entitlements. Among working seafarers in the general surveys, 14% of Merchant Navy and 29% of fishermen were concerned about benefits, and interviews highlighted considerable difficulties in understanding and making claims.

Seafarers who had approached maritime charities for support welcomed direct financial assistance, help to resolve debts and support to purchase “white goods” or furniture. Some said that their lack of information about maritime charities had, inevitably, delayed access to the help they needed.

4.6 Training and career development

The interviews revealed huge variations in career planning among ratings, officers and fishermen. In general, attention to careers increased with age and seniority but non-UK seafarers gave more attention to career planning than UK seafarers. Training and support for career development was most readily available in the Naval Service. Many non-UK merchant seafarers received more training than UK ratings who, in turn, were more concerned than UK officers about their lack of training. Ratings in the Merchant Navy survey ranked training second on a list of ten concerns at work, while officers ranked it fifth. All fishermen who had received training were aged under 25, but 20% of all ages were concerned at their lack of training, ranking it sixth out of ten concerns at work.

Merchant Navy officer cadets stressed the value of mentoring and support during training and the need for skills gained at sea to be transferable to shore-based maritime industries.

Interviews showed that seafarers tend to change jobs and careers in response to health and family needs, and changes in the industry. Resettlement programmes were available for Naval Service personnel. Merchant seafarers and fishermen were concerned about the lack of similar support for them. Adjusting to life ashore was difficult for many seafarers involved in the research, particularly for those who were unemployed after leaving work at sea.

4.7 Housing and accommodation

Most UK seafarers interviewed (56%) owned their own homes. This is lower than the national average. The pattern of home ownership varied and merchant ratings were least likely (36%) to be home owners, with Naval Service ratings the most likely (78%). Half of fishermen surveyed owned their homes. Among non-UK seafarers surveyed, neither housing in their home country nor accommodation in the UK were major concerns. Seafarers with concerns about housing or accommodation were likely to:

- ☐ be aged under 24 years
- ☐ have less than ten years’ experience working at sea
- ☐ live alone
- ☐ have experienced the break-up of a marriage or relationship.

Among UK seafarers, fishermen were more likely to be concerned about housing and accommodation: 14% in the general survey reported concerns compared to 5% of Merchant Navy respondents. But Merchant Navy ratings were more than twice as likely (9%) to be concerned as officers (4%), reflecting the likely link between housing problems and low incomes.

Both UK and non-UK seafarers who had used short-term accommodation in hostels, missions or centres, reported mixed experiences. Many single seafarers valued good, short-term accommodation in ports for seafarers between contracts or on shore leave. Most of those who had

used these services, and/or had housing concerns, needed advice and support to find long-term accommodation.

4.8 Knowledge of maritime charities

Most interviewees (64%) knew of some maritime charities (usually a seafarers' centre or Fishermen's Mission) and 31% had approached a charity for help, usually financial. This contrasts with low levels of access to maritime charities for information and advice. This high level of knowledge and contact may reflect use of charity venues for the interviews. Almost all the seafarers interviewed believed that maritime charities were intended to help people in greater need than themselves, even though many had needs with which charities could and would help. Knowledge and use of maritime charities reflected:

- ☐ the limited relevance of the services that maritime charities offer
- ☐ seafarers' culture of self-reliance
- ☐ lack of accessible information about maritime charities
- ☐ lack of support to apply to maritime charities for help.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The falling number of UK seafarers working at sea across all industry sectors, and the increase in non-UK seafarers visiting the UK, are well-known features of the industry, with specific implications for maritime charities, including those below.

- ☐ Port-based welfare services increasingly need to address the needs of visiting non-UK seafarers, who often have very little time ashore and need information about and access to services, communication facilities and healthcare.
- ☐ Feelings of isolation and difference from other occupational groups are likely to increase, leading to more demands for social contact with other seafarers and for seafarer-specific or seafarer-sensitive services.
- ☐ The prospect of fewer working UK seafarers does not diminish the needs of working seafarers for information, access to healthcare and preventative health initiatives, and support for resettlement, preparing for retirement and sustaining family life.

The research findings show that the pattern of seafarers' needs and aspirations during their working lives – at sea and ashore – is common to all sectors and unlikely to change significantly. They show a set of characteristics that make seafaring a lifestyle as well as job. It is a lifestyle that seafarers often enjoy but which also presents particular challenges and concerns, including:

- ☐ self-reliance and autonomy, and the use of networks of friends and family for support
- ☐ limited use of formal organisations or services for support
- ☐ isolation and loneliness, mixed with camaraderie, at sea and ashore
- ☐ the use of informal methods of resolving problems and finding information.

These characteristics lead to areas of concern particular to seafarers, including:

- ☐ fatigue, long hours and unhealthy lifestyles
- ☐ lack of information and advice on NI contributions, benefits and pensions
- ☐ unmet healthcare needs, particularly among fishermen
- ☐ inadequate preparation for retirement
- ☐ the need for support with family or personal relationships
- ☐ debt and money management problems, particularly for UK seafarers who are young and/or experience ill-health or a disability that prevents them from working at sea
- ☐ the need for support for re-training to work outside the maritime industries, especially for those with a long-term illness or disability
- ☐ lack of access to housing and accommodation for younger and single seafarers, particularly those on low incomes
- ☐ reluctance to use charities, with the exception of fishermen in contact with the Fishermen's Missions.

Those findings reinforce the results of other research into the nature of seafaring lives, particularly:

- ☪ the impact of fatigue and long working hours on health and safety at work
- ☪ the need for timely medical care in order to return to work at sea
- ☪ low incomes and debt among fishermen and merchant ratings
- ☪ the effect of isolation at sea and ashore
- ☪ the lack of training for work at sea and ashore
- ☪ the need for support for resettlement after a career at sea.

This research aims to inform maritime charities on how they can best support seafarers now and in the future. The pattern of needs and aspirations that emerges is supported by other work and provides a clear agenda for action by maritime charities and other organisations. Some of the findings stress the value of existing services, including information and advice services, and regular and one-off grants for individuals. Some call for new services, such as debt counselling and family support. Others suggest the need for new approaches to old problems, such as the development of more suitable short and long-term accommodation. As well as these specific recommendations, there is a general need to raise the awareness and confidence of seafarers about the roles that maritime charities can play in responding to their needs.

No single charity can respond to the needs of all seafarers and collaboration is essential to make the best use of expertise and resources. The finding that needs are common across the industry sectors means that needs-led partnerships and cross-sector initiatives are likely to work well and make best use of resources.

Unions, employers, public and private services and general charities also have a role in responding to seafarers' needs, and maritime charities are well placed to bring these different organisations together to develop effective responses to seafarers' needs.

WORKING AGE SEAFARERS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

1 Increase awareness among seafarers of maritime charities

In general, seafarers need better access to information about maritime charities together with support to apply for help. Work to increase access to information and support should address seafarers' self-reliance and promote greater awareness of what maritime charities offer. The most effective approaches are likely to be those that target seafarers and the formal and informal networks which, the research shows, they most often use to find information. Action might include the following:

- ☪ regular production and dissemination of a directory of maritime charities in printed and online formats
- ☪ a shared signposting function that provides information and directs enquiries to suitable resources, using post, telephone, e-mail and web-based systems
- ☪ one-to-one support for seafarers to find the help they need, through extended roles for charity staff and volunteers who receive initial inquiries or process applications
- ☪ compatible application and assessment procedures across maritime charities, together with information-sharing protocols
- ☪ a programme of local publicity in port areas about maritime charities and their work
- ☪ a programme of national publicity targeted at union publications and other media that appeal to seafarers and their families.

In more specific terms:

- ☪ maritime charities could run a publicity programme for seafarers about their work, addressing different audiences and emphasising the message that maritime charities are 'seafarers supporting seafarers'
- ☪ unions could publish regular information about the work of maritime charities and their own work with seafarers

- ☐ maritime employers could regularly disseminate information about maritime charities to senior officers
- ☐ charity services that deal with non-UK seafarers visiting UK ports should ensure that information is available about local resources.

2 Raise awareness of seafarers' needs outside the maritime industries

Seafarers face particular issues in their working and personal lives that may not be understood or appreciated by general organisations. Raising awareness of these issues should improve the sensitivity of responses. This should be a collaborative venture involving maritime charities, unions and employers. Work should target local organisations in port communities, including general charities, and national organisations with local networks that, the research shows, seafarers may approach for assistance, including:

- ☐ the Citizens Advice service
- ☐ Jobcentre Plus
- ☐ local authority housing departments
- ☐ housing associations
- ☐ social care services.

3 Service development

No single charity can respond to the needs of all seafarers. Effective use of resources and good governance requires maritime charities to work together and with other relevant organisations to plan and deliver services that effectively respond to seafarers' needs.

Maritime charities can play a role in bringing different organisations together to develop responses to seafarers' needs. At local level, area-based reviews and plans could build on the model of Port Welfare Committees and involve maritime and non-maritime organisations that affect seafarers' lives. At national and regional levels, reviews and plans could build on the model of the working groups administered by the Merchant Navy Welfare Board and extend their work with general organisations. A range of initiatives to respond to the needs which the research identified as priorities is outlined below.

3.1 Increased access to information and advice

Actions to make information and advice more readily available to seafarers include those detailed below.

- ☐ Developing a greater role for the Seafarers' Benefits Advice Line (SBAL), including more publicity about its work, through the informal and formal networks that seafarers use, and a consideration of a broader name such as "Seafarers' Advice and Information Line".
- ☐ Extending information services for non-UK seafarers at ports, emphasising access to communication services, transport, confidential health services and other welfare support. Seafarer centres, ship visitors and chaplains should continue to disseminate information, supported by Port Welfare Committees and the MNWB.
- ☐ Raising senior merchant officers' and employers' awareness of maritime information services such as ISAN and SBAL.
- ☐ Increasing publicity to seafarers about National Insurance, pensions and benefits should involve employers, unions and SBAL.
- ☐ Maritime charities should consider together how best to support seafarers' access to debt and money advice services. Action is likely to involve collaboration between maritime charities and specialist non-maritime organisations and may include roles for employers and unions.

3.2 Increased access to timely clinical diagnoses and treatment

A range of actions are needed to ensure that seafarers have access to NHS care and treatment to enable them to return or continue to work at sea.

- ☐ Research should be carried out to assess the level and nature of need for NHS care and treatment by merchant seafarers and fishermen (UK and non-UK) working in the UK, and how it can best be provided. The project should be led by the Seamen's Hospital Society and involve the Department for Transport, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA), employers, unions and healthcare providers. Findings should inform a programme to support seafarers' access to healthcare.
- ☐ Publicity about timely access to medical care and rehabilitation should be disseminated to all seafarers, particularly fishermen and merchant seafarers, and involve a range of maritime and general organisations.

- ☐ Information about access to confidential medical services for UK and non-UK seafarers should be distributed through seafarer centres, maritime charities, unions and relevant public bodies.
- ☐ Information about the Dreadnought Medical Service should target fishermen and involve the Fishermen's Missions, Dreadnought and the Seamen's Hospital Society.
- ☐ Dreadnought should routinely send all working seafarers referred to the service information about support available for travel and overnight accommodation.
- ☐ Unions and maritime employers should be encouraged to assess the potential for sick pay or health insurance schemes that offer payments during illness.
- ☐ Maritime charities should together consider how they can best offer support to seafarers who are affected by industrial injury or work-related illnesses.
- ☐ Relevant public bodies and employers should address the need for appropriate compensation schemes for seafarers affected by industrial injury and work-related illnesses.

3.3 *Increased access to preventative health initiatives*

Better health awareness and support for preventative care is needed to combat unhealthy lifestyles that may prevent continuing work at sea. Initiatives include the following:

- ☐ health promotion initiatives that address lifestyle, diet, exercise and fitness
- ☐ support for social contact on board ships
- ☐ increased awareness of the importance of rehabilitation
- ☐ proactive distribution of clear information about improving health and fitness, including routine distribution to seafarers who apply for assistance and publicity in union and employer magazines and mailings.

3.4 *Preparation and planning for retirement*

Maritime charities may help seafarers to prepare better for retirement by:

- ☐ supporting social contact between seafarers, including charity support for social websites, chatrooms, events and clubs
- ☐ routinely and proactively providing information and advice about pensions and NI contributions to seafarers who apply to charities for assistance, including referrals to SBAL or other advisory services
- ☐ supporting seafarers in resettlement after leaving work at sea, including training and support for those looking for other work before retirement and those with a long-term illness or disability.

3.5 *Support for seafarers' family lives*

Maritime charities can support seafarers and their families to manage some of the difficulties of seafaring lives by developing direct services and supporting seafarer-sensitive services in general organisations.

Initiatives could include:

- ☐ support for family organisations working with UK seafarers' families
- ☐ working with international organisations to support non-UK seafarer families
- ☐ support for childcare for UK shore-based partners
- ☐ emotional support services that particularly address family relationships and bereavement, including work by ship visitors and chaplains.

3.6 *Support for training and career opportunities, at sea and ashore*

Maritime charities could support better training for seafarers working at sea and retraining for work outside the maritime industries by:

- ☐ increasing awareness of the existing financial support available from employers and unions for ratings training to become officers
- ☐ continuing to provide distance learning, study support and onboard learning resources, building on the work of the Marine Society and Sea Cadets
- ☐ further development of mentoring schemes for cadets and trainees
- ☐ support for comprehensive resettlement services for seafarers who are unable to continue working at sea because of illness or disability affecting them or their immediate families, including information, advice, advocacy, practical support and financial resources
- ☐ support for retraining for seafarers who leave the maritime industries.

3.7 *Housing and accommodation*

Maritime charities should work with general housing providers to increase access to suitable housing and accommodation for seafarers who are single, including the following:

- ☐ Proactively providing accessible information and advice about short and long-term housing options that meet seafarers' needs. Information should accompany maritime charities' assessments of applications for support.
- ☐ Reviewing the options for partnerships between maritime charities and housing associations to provide housing for seafarers, including equity sharing schemes and short and long-term accommodation suitable for seafarers who are single.

SECTION D

Dependants and families of working age seafarers

1 INTRODUCTION

Over 300 family members or adult dependants of seafarers, and 42 organisations working with the seafaring community, contributed to this part of the research programme. The researchers gathered a wealth of information about the needs, aspirations, lives and lifestyles of seafarers' dependants and families, using postal surveys, analyses of case records, telephone interviews and a focus group. The findings were considered alongside public policy on children and families, and other research about seafarers and their lives.³²

The research concentrated on children aged under 18 and families because this was the largest group of dependants in need. But the research also considered the needs of families caring for disabled adults, adult carers and widowed dependants without children.

The clear and consistent pictures that emerged from the different areas of research suggest that maritime charities can be confident the findings are relevant to all seafarers' dependants and families. Analysis of the findings in the context of current and expected trends in public policy means recommendations can be made to help maritime charities make the most of charitable and public resources to support the families and dependants of seafarers.

CASE STUDY 6

Clare is 11 and Jonathan is 19. They moved from Grimsby with their mother after their father, a fisherman, was drowned. The family do not talk about the death and it is not clear whether Clare knows what happened to him. The move was prompted by their mother's wish to escape painful memories, but depression has made it hard for her to make friends and the family is isolated from relations and former friends. Their flat is in a poor state of repair. Clare's mother has an overdraft of £2,000 and owes money to catalogues. She seems overwhelmed and feels powerless to make any changes to their lives. Last year Jonathan was admitted to hospital after a psychotic breakdown. His health is much better now. Clare's school attendance is poor, and when she is absent health reasons are given, but she has told the learning support worker that she doesn't like leaving her mother. At school, teachers say Clare is pleasant and cooperative but she finds it hard to make friends.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 Demographics

The lack of publicly-accessible data profiling the seafaring community was a stumbling block for this research and the programme as a whole. Available data was used with assumptions drawn from national household profiles refined in the light of qualitative information drawn from this and other research.

³² The research summarised here was commissioned by the Maritime Charities Funding Group and undertaken by the National Children's Bureau. Electronic copies of the full report are available from The Merchant Navy Welfare Board.

FIGURE D1: CURRENT & PROJECTED NUMBERS OF CHILDREN AGED UNDER 18 IN THE SEAFARING COMMUNITY 2005-20

	Total (range)	Naval Service	Merchant Navy	Fishing
2005	146 -157,000	90 -95,000	38-40,000	18-22,000
2010	126 -135,000	80-85,000	33-35,000	13-15,000
2015	125-140,000	80-90,000	25-28,000	10-12,000
2020	96-104,000	70-75,000	18-20,000	8-9,000

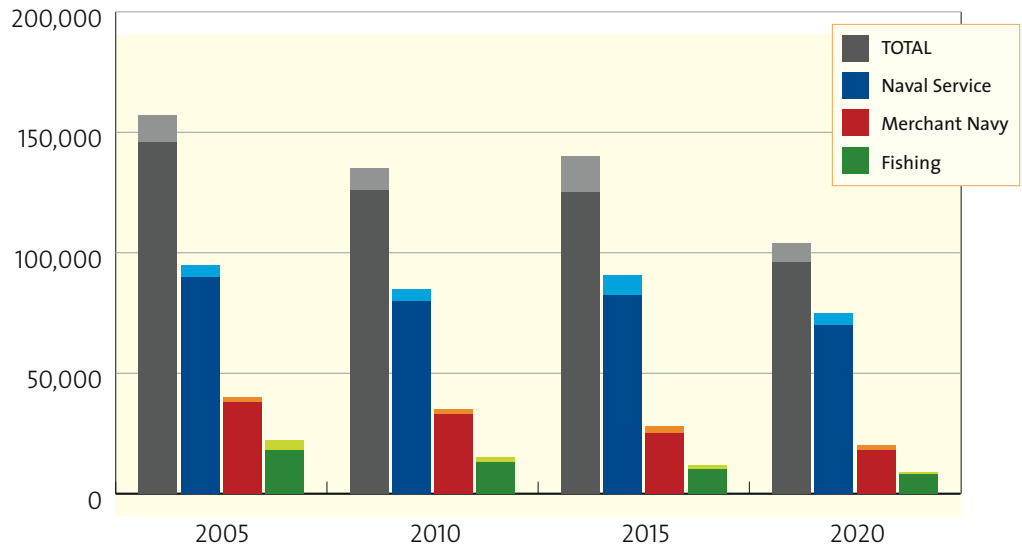


FIGURE D2: CURRENT & PROJECTED NUMBERS OF ADULT DEPENDANTS UNDER RETIREMENT AGE IN THE SEAFARING COMMUNITY 2005-20

	Total (range)	Naval Service	Merchant Navy	Fishing
2005	190-204,000	115-120,000	52-58,000	23-26,000
2010	155-170,000	100-115,000	38-42,000	17-20,000
2015	154-166,000	100-110,000	35-40,000	14-16,000
2020	116-141,000	80-100,000	25-28,000	11-13,000

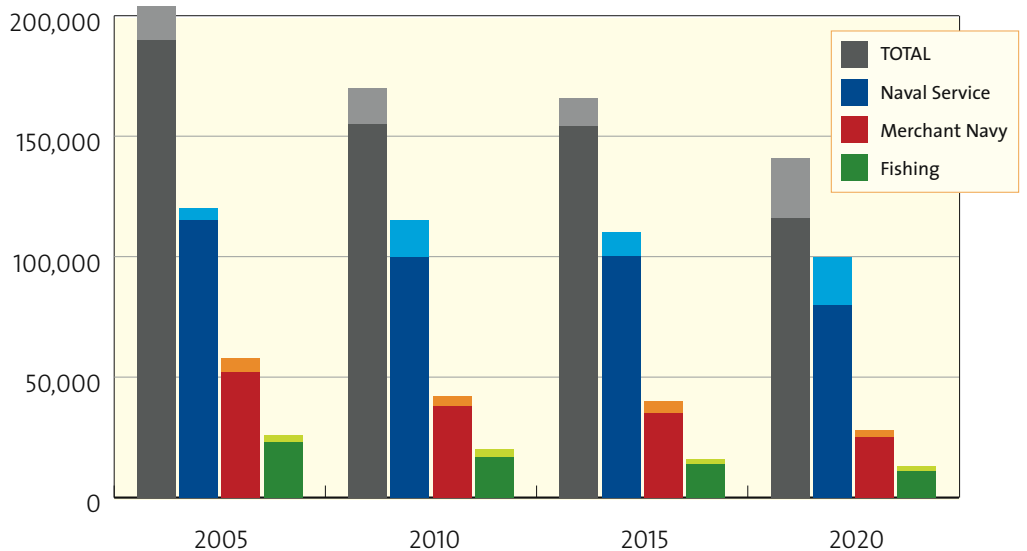


FIGURE D3: DEPENDANTS UNDER RETIREMENT AGE, INCLUDING CHILDREN UNDER 18, IN THE SEAFARING COMMUNITY 2005-20

	Total (range)	Naval Service	Merchant Navy	Fishing
2005	336-361,000	205-215,000	90-98,000	41-48,000
2010	281-312,000	180-200,000	71-77,000	30-35,000
2015	264-296,000	180-200,000	60-68,000	24-28,000
2020	212-243,000	150-175,000	43-48,000	19-20,000

The predominantly male workforce in the maritime industries means that most adult dependants are women. The research found high rates of separation, divorce and death among working seafarers. As a result many seafarer families are headed by a single parent, usually a woman.

Except for those of fishermen, seafarers' families and dependants appear to be more widely scattered geographically than seafarers themselves. This results from household moves after families break-up and, particularly for Naval Service families deciding not to move when the seafarer's job moves.

The general demographic trends towards a falling birth rate and an ageing population, and the falling number of working seafarers, suggest that the number of seafarers' dependants and families will fall over the next 20 years. But the tendency towards serial relationships among seafarers, low re-marriage rates among ex-wives and the high turnover of seafarers in the industry mean it is unlikely that the number of adult dependants and families will fall as sharply as population trends and projected changes in the maritime industries suggest.

The research found that many seafarers' dependants and families are likely to have long-term and severe needs. This reflects the age profile of many adult dependants, in particular young widows, and frequent and severe poverty, debt and financial needs associated with caring for children or for adults who have a disability.

2.2 Policy

The legislation and policy guidance covering services that support children, vulnerable adults and families are similar across the UK.

The Children Act 2004, and the associated policy programme *Every Child Matters*, provides the public policy context for work with children and families. It aims to ensure that children:

- ☐ are healthy
- ☐ stay safe
- ☐ enjoy and achieve
- ☐ make a positive contribution
- ☐ achieve economic wellbeing.

The essential ingredients in the strategy are:

- ☐ a clear assessment of need, avoiding repeat assessments
- ☐ an early response to problems through better information-sharing at local level
- ☐ joint agency responses across children's services, including education and health
- ☐ a partnership approach to work with families
- ☐ measuring the effectiveness of service responses to need.

The government commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020 is a further element of the policy context.

In England, three Acts define policy for supporting carers:

- ☐ The Carers (Recognition and Services) Act 1995
- ☐ The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000

- ☐ The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004.

The other main policy initiative relevant to seafarers' dependants and families is adult care, where resources are being shifted into preventative work and more care being provided outside hospitals as proposed in the White Paper *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say*.

CASE STUDY 7

The sudden death of a fisherman at the age of 39 left his family without any financial provision. Caring commitments and few local job opportunities, on top of the bereavement itself, meant his widow could not find appropriate employment. Their financial difficulties increased, worsening the grief and emotional needs of the whole family.

3 RESEARCHING CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Four approaches were used to gather comprehensive information for analysis:

- ☐ desk research – examining data and publications on the maritime industries and seafarers' dependants and families, and comparing data with that on the wider UK population
- ☐ contacts with 54 staff in 42 organisations working with seafarers and their families, through telephone and personal semi-structured interviews, and a focus group
- ☐ a Matching Needs and Services (MNS) audit³³ using a sample of 250 cases (related to 144 families of seafarers under retirement age) drawn from the records of the Sailors' Families' Society, NUMAST Welfare Funds and the Royal Merchant Navy School Foundation
- ☐ a postal questionnaire to 500 families who were in touch with one of eight maritime charities, resulting in 150 responses (a 30% response rate).

The findings were considered alongside public policy and established good practice in work with children, families, carers and vulnerable adults. As a result, the researchers developed a clear picture of the needs and aspirations of seafarers' dependants and families, and of the opportunities for maritime charities to develop services that can better support them and respond to their needs.

4 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Survey responses and interviews with organisations showed there was a consistent pattern of needs and aspirations regardless of the sector of the industry in which seafarers worked. The MNS audit tool defined clear areas of need and compared those to children and families in other occupational groups.

Because the research concentrated on the group of dependants in most need – children under 18 and families – the findings naturally focus on that group, but it is likely that they will apply to other groups of dependants, particularly vulnerable adults and adult dependants who are caring for a disabled adult.

The key findings of the research are set out below.

- ☐ There is a high incidence of single mothers and widows – most but not all with children – among all seafarers' dependants and families.
- ☐ Adult dependants have limited knowledge or understanding of maritime charities and make limited use of services other than those embedded in local communities, such as the Fishermen's Mission.

³³ MNS is a tool to assess the needs of children receiving services. The results are used to inform the planning of services. Although the term "audit" is more familiar in its financial sense, it is increasingly used in environmental, health and social settings to describe the systematic measurement of impact, and it is used in that sense in this report.

- ☐ Lone mothers place a high value on direct one-to one contact with charity staff.
- ☐ Dependants and families make limited use of information, advice or resources from maritime charities, even when they are relevant to their needs.
- ☐ The significant difficulties which seafarers face in adjusting to life ashore after ceasing to work at sea also affect their families and dependants.
- ☐ Dependants and families feel isolated from other people in similar circumstances, especially following bereavement.
- ☐ There is a high incidence of complex emotional needs among seafarers' children, often linked to poverty which is prevalent and, in some families entrenched.
- ☐ Important needs that are not being adequately met by maritime charities include complex emotional and other support for parents and children, debt and money advice, and greater financial help to meet day-to-day needs and to improve quality of life.

The findings from the MNS audit emphasised the high incidence of personal and family needs and described them in three areas.

- ☐ Emotional needs of parents or children, including issues related to:
 - bereavement
 - physical or mental ill-health among parents
 - children with special needs
 - trauma.

Needs arising from the death or ill-health of a parent were the most frequent in the sample and affected over a third of children.

- ☐ Parenting needs, including:
 - coping with the practical and emotional problems of parenting, including poverty and debt
 - providing children with continuity of care from relatives.

Parenting needs made up the second largest group of needs in the sample, affecting over one fifth of children, and were strongly related to overwhelming debt.

- ☐ Family relationship needs, focused on:
 - children's relationships and contact with their non-resident parent (usually their father)
 - the impact of domestic violence and other adult conflict on children and families.

Findings from across the research were considered in relation to the two questions in sections 4.1 and 4.2 below.

4.1 Are the needs of seafarers' dependants and families being met?

The first issue was whether the pressing needs identified in the MNS audit were being met. On the whole, they were not. Maritime charities did not see their role as dealing with emotional, parenting or family issues because they focused on finances. Their aim was to respond to requests for cash help, not to identify, assess and respond to the other needs of dependants or families. Among all children in the UK, 4% are estimated to have complex emotional needs together with 11% of women and 7% of men. The research suggests that up to 30% of seafarers' children and families experience these needs.

The second issue was whether maritime charities' regular or one-off grants met the financial needs of dependants and families. The findings showed that the poverty which some dependants and families experienced was severe and chronic, and levels of family debt were disturbingly high. Grants, while welcomed, were not sufficient to meet debt repayments or help people to resolve debt problems. In the case of regular grants for children, payments were lower than the levels that

could have been given without affecting entitlement to statutory benefits.³⁴ The context of seafarer poverty is that around 17% of all UK households live in poverty³⁵ but that some 33% of UK adults have significant debts.³⁶ Nationally, poverty and debt are concentrated among people aged under 34, households without work and households with children.

4.2 *Are seafarers' dependants and families different from other groups?*

The family survey found that seafarers' dependants and families see differences between their lifestyles and those of the rest of society. These differences result from:

- ☐ a parent frequently working away from home
- ☐ the experience of isolation from partners, and from families in similar circumstances
- ☐ feelings of separateness from non-seafaring families.

A comparison between the MNS audit of seafarers' children and an audit of children in families in touch with the government-funded Sure Start programme for vulnerable families found a general similarity between the needs of seafaring and non-seafaring children and families, but distinguished eight areas of difference between the two groups.

☐ **More parental death**

The MNS audit findings gave a graphic picture of the dangers of working at sea and the consequences for families: children without fathers, mothers without partners, loss of income, loss of married quarters and loss of connection with the seafaring community. There are further financial and emotional problems when a seafarer's body is not recovered following death at sea. The survey clearly reinforced these findings, showing the high incidence of widowhood and how bereavement was a huge source of distress for families which, because it is part of life at sea, may be underestimated.

☐ **More dislocation of family and home**

Seafarers' families tended to move home, within the UK and abroad, more than other groups, with the consequent loss of neighbourhood, the need to change schools and disrupted links with relatives and friends. Moves were caused by the death or disability of the seafarer, marital break-up and, for Naval Service families, service relocations. The MNS audit found that housing was a serious problem for many single mothers following separation, divorce or the death of their partner, and a cause of anxiety about their children's schooling, friends and social life.

☐ **More adult conflict**

Disputes between parents were a major feature of the lives of those seafarers' children studied in the MNS audit. Conflict often continued after marriages and relationships had broken up. Even allowing for higher rates of parental death, far fewer seafarers' children lived with both parents than the children of people in other occupational groups.

☐ **Less contact with non-resident fathers**

Continued contact between children and fathers after parental separation is a difficult issue for many families, but the problem was more common and more entrenched among seafarers' families than others. This lack of contact is a separate issue from the long absences that families experience when a seafarer is working at sea, but those may contribute to marital break-up and lack of contact afterwards.

³⁴ From 2 October 2006 certain charitable and voluntary payments of income are disregarded in full for the purposes of assessing eligibility for benefits. See Social Security (Miscellaneous amendments) (number 4) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006 No. 2378). The research considered support provided prior to that date.

³⁵ Poverty is defined as living on an income that is less than 60% of median disposable income.

³⁶ Debts that cannot be paid off at the end of the month.

☞ **More single mothers without a partner**

The incidence of separated mothers living with a new partner was found to be very low and had implications for their financial needs and the need for better training and work opportunities for women.

☞ **More isolation**

The greater isolation of seafarers' families was clear and took different forms.

- **Families were isolated from relatives and friends** when they moved home following separation, divorce or the death or unemployment of partners or, for Naval Service families, a service relocation.
- **Families were isolated from others in similar circumstances** after moving home and because seafaring is a "different" occupation in which there is a strong culture and need for self-reliance.
- **Naval Service families were isolated from the "Service family"** when marriages broke-up, seafarers died or left the Service.
- **Families were isolated from general services** despite having clear needs and being eligible for support from various statutory and voluntary services. Maritime charities seemed to be the only organisations that engaged with them, but their focus on financial needs meant that other needs were not met.

One or more, and sometimes all, of these elements of isolation affected the different families in the sample.

☞ **More anxiety about change**

Anxiety about change, especially for those having to adjust to life ashore, appeared to be unique to seafarers. This anxiety reflected the dilemmas facing seafarers, particularly young people, who had lost jobs at sea. Loss of work means loss of lifestyle, and the adjustment needed as a result of injury, ill-health or redundancy is compounded by the need to find new ways of living as well as working. The deeply-felt anxiety this generated was clearly reflected in difficulties in managing the transition to life ashore and affected the lives of seafarers' children and families.

☞ **More poverty**

Where seafarers' families experienced poverty, it was deeper and more entrenched than in other families. The impact of poverty was also more acute when it coincided with the emotional needs facing families. Getting out of poverty, and finding work or training opportunities, was harder for those who were also distressed and isolated.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The reduction in the number of working UK seafarers as a result of changes in the maritime industries is unlikely to be mirrored by an equal fall in the number of dependants and families of working and former seafarers. Their number will be affected by trends including falling national birth rates and by patterns of seafarers' serial relationships.

The large number of women dependants of seafarers who are single, divorced, separated or widowed means that maritime charities will probably need to provide continuing support for a long time. National research shows that single parents are likely to continue to be poor even when their children cease to be dependent on them. Those without children are less likely to be able to call on a wider family network for support.

The age profile of widows of working age seafarers involved in the research implies that maritime charities may need to provide continuing support for at least 25 years, when the youngest widow in the research sample will reach 50. This suggests that maritime charities

must ensure they are able to meet the ongoing needs of widows and children in the long term.

The geographical scatter of dependants and families means maritime charities must be able to work across the UK. Work with the dependants and families of fishermen is likely to be concentrated in past and present fishing areas and maritime charities should particularly ensure their work is relevant and accessible in Scotland, where the largest single proportion (45%) of working fishermen in the UK live.

The nature and scale of the needs identified by the research is unlikely to change over time. Emotional needs, issues with family relationships and poverty reflect the nature of seafaring and the circumstances of single parents. To plan and respond effectively, and make the most of resources, maritime charities should set their responses to the needs of children and families within the government's overall strategy for improving the lives for all children and families. This is defined in the Children Act 2004, the policy programme *Every Child Matters* and the developing work of national Children's Commissioners.

The challenge for maritime charities, and for others in the voluntary sector, is to develop work that complements the public policy agenda and ensures that seafarers' families receive suitable public services, while making best use of their own resources. The research suggests three broad areas for action.

5.1 *Comprehensive assessments of need and professional case working*

The level and range of needs revealed by the MNS audit suggest that if maritime charities used comprehensive assessments of needs, rather than concentrating solely on financial needs, and more professional case work systems, they would make a much more positive impact on the lives of children and families. This approach offers a structure for maritime charities to support dependants and families in accessing resources from both inside and outside the maritime charity sector, and could support more responses to more needs. Case workers³⁷ working in partnership with families to deal with a range of needs can also reduce isolation. New services might be developed to further reduce isolation, such as initiatives to link families and dependants to others in similar circumstances or local organisations. This approach would also equip maritime charities to target financial and other support at those in greatest need.

A case study and template for the systematic and comprehensive assessment of needs was developed as part of the research in order to demonstrate how maritime charities can meet needs more effectively through a comprehensive assessment process.

5.2 *Needs-led services*

Maritime charities aim to respond to individual and family need, but the MNS audit and the survey indicated that pressing needs were not being met because most maritime charities focused almost exclusively on financial issues. This reflects practices that were beneficial in the past, and also charities' lack of knowledge of other needs. The research findings show that charities can have the greatest effect if their work is led by the needs of potential beneficiaries, and that mechanisms are needed to identify these needs continually.

The findings show that an increased level of regular and one-off grants would not have affected statutory benefits. Alongside support to manage debts, greater financial support would make a major difference to people's lives. Charities could also use the information they gather about poverty in the seafaring community to influence local and national anti-poverty policies, and promote approaches that benefit seafarers.

³⁷ Case workers are professionals who carry out holistic assessments of need. Caseworkers agree and undertake a number of tasks with and on behalf of individuals or families in order to address the needs of the person/family assessed. This may include advocacy, provision of services and liaison with statutory and voluntary organisations. Case working might be time limited. It always focuses on the needs of the individual or family.

The findings make clear that needs for emotional, personal and family support are not being adequately met. Action to respond better to these needs could enhance individual and family wellbeing. The most useful approaches would involve working in partnership with specialist non-maritime organisations. Support for transitions and re-settlement after work at sea are important and reflected in findings of other research into the needs of seafarers under the usual retirement age³⁸.

5.3 Standards and quality

The research findings indicate shared needs of families and dependants across the industry sectors. This means that shared standards, shared work and collaboration to define sector-wide strategies for services, and communication about maritime charities and their work, are likely to make best use of charity resources and make it easier for dependants and families to find out how charities may support them.

The research led to recommendations for action to develop these approaches, including:

- ☐ the development of maritime charities' access to skills and expertise about public policy and practice in social welfare
- ☐ the development of partnerships, across the sector and with other organisations, to define and deliver effective responses to emotional, parenting and family relationship needs
- ☐ work to set the needs of seafarers' dependants and families in a wider context so that maritime resources can target needs that are specific to, or more intense among, seafaring families and dependants
- ☐ work to inform and influence non-maritime organisations so they can better support seafarers' families and dependants by developing greater sensitivity to their circumstances
- ☐ the development of accreditation of high standards in maritime charities' work.

The research also identified priorities for service development by maritime charities, including

- ☐ better financial support for individuals and families in need
- ☐ debt advice and support to access credit on reasonable terms
- ☐ support for re-settlement by seafarers ceasing to work at sea
- ☐ initiatives to reduce social isolation
- ☐ initiatives to increase access to emotional, parenting and family relationship support.

DEPENDANTS AND FAMILIES OF WORKING AGE SEAFARERS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- 1 Increased use of general resources by seafarers' dependants and families
 - a Maritime charities working with seafarers' dependants and children need to regularly update their understanding of relevant policy and good practice to ensure that they keep abreast of changes and can support access to general services by seafarers' families. This may involve support for trustees and staff to understand the policy context of their work and the value of partnership working.
 - b The concentration of UK fishermen in Scotland means that maritime charities need to ensure that their services for dependants and families of fishermen are available and relevant in Scotland.
 - c Maritime charities should:
 - ☐ collate information about the range of maritime and general services and resources that can respond to the needs of dependants and families identified by the research
 - ☐ ensure staff and volunteers can use collated information to direct dependants and families to appropriate services and resources and help people to contact services when required
 - ☐ encourage local organisations in areas where seafarers are concentrated to understand the particular circumstances and needs of seafarers' families and the value of reaching out and including them in local activity.

38 See Section C: Working age seafarers, page 35.

2 Employ and train staff to undertake comprehensive assessments of need

Maritime charities should introduce comprehensive assessments of need to extend the financial assessments that inform regular and one-off grants. A consistent approach should be developed across maritime charities that work with dependants and children which is compatible with the approaches used by public services.

To implement this approach, maritime charities should either directly employ trained family support workers or fund those posts in local organisations that can provide a professional service on behalf of charities. Maritime charities could share or co-fund staff to work locally across industry sectors.

3 Professional staff and volunteers working in partnership with families

Adult dependants valued support from charity staff. To make the most of that relationship, maritime charities should continue to:

- ☐ develop working practices that support partnerships between families and charities
- ☐ ensure all staff and volunteers in contact with dependants and families are competent and confident in working in partnership with families, including training to develop skills in understanding the impact of ethnicity, class, gender and disability on adults and children
- ☐ provide clear information to dependants and families about eligibility, support and why decisions are taken.

4 Define needs-led services

- a The Matching Needs and Services (MNS) audit provides a tool for maritime charities to develop shared and ongoing understanding of needs and collaborative responses. Continuing use of a common needs-based assessment approach such as MNS across maritime charities would enable needs to be aggregated and inform the development of services that are most needed.
- b Identifying needs should be the foundation for all maritime charities' services. Recommendation 5 (below) should be seen within this broad approach.

5 Provide financial and non-financial support to dependants and families in need

Maritime charities should:

- ☐ ensure that financial assistance is given as swiftly as possible
- ☐ investigate how to define and support effective services to support people in managing and clearing debts, including action to increase access to credit on reasonable terms (building on the work of the Royal Sailors Rest initiative on debt and its link with Credit Action and the work of the Naval Personal and Family Service)
- ☐ explore how maritime charities alone, in collaboration across the sector, or in partnership with general charities, can provide direct services that respond to the emotional, parenting and family relationship needs identified by the research
- ☐ pro-actively develop support for re-settlement by seafarers leaving work at sea, including support for managing personal and family changes, responding to training and job opportunities and making best use of local resources
- ☐ support dependants and families to access the information and advice they need
- ☐ explore ways in which seafarers' families and dependants can support others in similar circumstances, including providing support for local social groups, internet chatrooms or email groups.

6 Quality standards and accreditation

Maritime charities should together consider how to develop accredited quality standards, across the sector and across different services, and develop a strategy to meet appropriate standards. This work requires co-ordination and collaboration between maritime charities and the engagement of trustees and senior staff.

SECTION E

Young people in maritime youth groups

1 INTRODUCTION

This area of research was undertaken by the Marine Society and Sea Cadets (MSSC)³⁹ in order to understand better the needs and aspirations of Cadets and the adult volunteers who work with them. Over 950 cadets and 600 adult volunteers in Sea Cadet units contributed to the research by responding to postal questionnaires and participating in focus groups around the UK. This high level of involvement gives confidence that the research findings are relevant to all cadets and volunteers and other maritime youth groups.

Changes in population structures and in the interests and activities of young people raise questions about the relevance and impact of maritime youth groups for young people. Many youth groups are experiencing falling membership.

The research aimed to inform the MSSC of issues of concern and indicate priorities for action to support Sea Cadet units in delivering high-quality work with young people that builds on their interest in maritime activities and careers.⁴⁰ The findings will help the MSSC to develop training and support for cadets, adult volunteers and unit management committees.⁴¹ They will also be of interest to other maritime organisations and organisations working with young people.

2 CONTEXT

2.1 Demography

In 2006 recruitment to Sea Cadet units rose by 4% to almost 13,000. But prior to 2006, the number of sea cadets had been declining at an average annual rate of 3.3% for many years. Other young people's organisations show a similar trend: research by the Scout Association in 1997-8 found an average annual fall of 4.8% across all uniformed youth organisations.

Falling membership reflects the national demographic trend of a declining birth rate and hence a smaller proportion of young people in the population. Projections suggest that the number of children aged under 16 will stay much the same over the next 20 years at around 11.5 million. Falling membership also reflects the changing interests of young people.

The research found that 60% of Sea Cadets were boys, with 25% of respondents having some form of disability, the largest proportion of whom reported a learning disability (10%).

The number of uniformed adult volunteer instructors in Sea Cadet units remains stable, at just under 4,500, but changing work and housing patterns suggest it may be more difficult to recruit

³⁹ Electronic copies of the full report are available from the Merchant Navy Welfare Board.

⁴⁰ The MSSC supports a network of 386 Sea Cadet units. These are voluntary, uniformed, youth organisations open to young people aged 12 to 18 years old and have Junior Sections open to those aged 10 to 12 years old. Over 12,500 young people are active in Sea Cadet units.

⁴¹ Adult volunteers provide training and instruction for Cadets as well as varied support for units. Unit management committee members are volunteers who are primarily involved in running units.

and retain traditional volunteers: 60% are former cadets and 23% are family members of cadets. Most volunteers were male (69%) and 10% reported some form of disability.

2.2 Policy

Three areas of government policy affect maritime youth groups.

- ☐ **Children:** *Every Child Matters* and the Children Act 2004 define a framework for all organisations working with children, which emphasises working together to ensure that children can:

 - be healthy
 - stay safe
 - enjoy and achieve
 - make a positive contribution
 - achieve economic wellbeing.

- ☐ **Young people:** *Youth Matters* set out an agenda for action to support 13 to 19-year-olds so that they may have 'somewhere to go, something to do and someone to talk to'. As part of the comprehensive spending review, a Treasury discussion document⁴² highlighted the importance of experiences outside formal education, particularly participating in positive activities and having access to support. Alongside these initiatives, young people have been encouraged to take part in decision-making as part of citizenship initiatives, and to provide feedback to services.

- ☐ **Adult volunteers:** The Government's approach to volunteering is centred on two initiatives:

 - The Russell Commission report and the new charity "V", which will provide grants for organisations to develop volunteering opportunities for young people and employ staff to stimulate and co-ordinate activity locally.
 - Volunteering for All, a programme of work to raise the profile of volunteering among adults.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

A range of methods was used to collect qualitative and quantitative information.

- ☐ The research company Derived Knowledge undertook three separate but related questionnaire surveys⁴³ of Cadets and volunteers involved with Sea Cadet units, achieving good response rates of between 11% and 14%.
- ☐ 60 Cadets and 200 adult volunteers joined 24 focus groups organised by the MSSC around the UK to discuss how Sea Cadet units might develop.
- ☐ An exercise was carried out to map youth organisations and providers of maritime activities and training for young people.
- ☐ A small assessment of awareness of Sea Cadets was undertaken via a questionnaire delivered to all UK ships participating in the Tall Ships Race, to which 65 responses were received.

In 2005, Sail Training International commissioned an international study of the characteristics and value of sail training. The initial findings were reviewed for lessons for the MSSC.

4 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Cadets' needs and aspirations

The postal questionnaire survey and focus groups highlighted Cadets' aspirations for maritime activities, the most popular of which were sailing, canoeing and rowing. Most Cadets (82%)

⁴² Policy review of children and young people, a discussion paper, January 2007, HM Treasury

⁴³ Cadets, adult volunteer instructors, unit management committee members.

wanted externally recognised awards for their roles and activities, and more water-based activities and training. Many also wanted “work-like” experiences at sea.

Sail Training International research found that most young people surveyed had taken part in sail training initiatives because they liked the idea of being on a boat (66%) and/or wanted a challenge (65%). Young people's expectations and experiences of sail training were clear:

- ☛ 73% thought they would develop technical skills and 63% did
- ☛ 59% expected to develop teamwork skills and 53% did
- ☛ 42% expected to be more confident and 61% were
- ☛ 22% thought they would make new friends and 27% did.

These findings strengthen those of the MSSC survey by highlighting the importance to young people of developing skills and confidence.

4.2 Cadets and careers at sea

The survey findings highlighted Cadets' interest in increasing their experience of working ships, including visits and work experience on board.

The two main reasons⁴⁴ for joining Sea Cadet units were an interest in a Naval Service career (35%) and the belief that membership and activities would help in finding other careers or jobs (31%). 12% joined because they wanted to be associated with the Naval Service. Almost half the respondents (48%) were planning a career in the Royal Navy or Marines and 6% wanted to pursue careers in the Merchant Navy.

In 2006, 18% of new entrants to the Naval Service at *HMS Raleigh*⁴⁵ had been Sea Cadets. Statistics from *HMS Raleigh* show that former Sea Cadets are more likely to complete basic training than recruits without a Cadet background. In 2003-4, 40% of Senior Rates attending the Royal Navy School of Leadership and Management (SLAM) were former Sea Cadets. Sea Cadet experience may be linked with a greater commitment to developing a Naval career. The Sea Cadet units' annual statistical returns for 2003-2006 indicate that at least 15 former Sea Cadets joined the Merchant Navy.

The MSSC actively encourages Cadets who aspire to a career at sea by directing them to careers advice, linking with the Royal Navy Careers Offices and raising awareness of career opportunities through publications such as *Seafarer*.

4.3 Adult volunteer instructors and unit management committees

The main reasons volunteers gave for joining Sea Cadet units were previous experience as a Sea Cadet (60%) or family connections with Sea Cadets (23%). On average, volunteer instructors spend 16.6 hours a week on Sea Cadet unit activities, which often include fundraising. This is four times longer than the national average for voluntary work in the UK, and higher than the average time spent by adult volunteers in any other uniformed youth group.

Unit management committees are responsible for raising funds to ensure units can function effectively and follow health and safety guidelines. On average, units need to raise £10,000 to £12,000 per annum to cover their core costs, and additional funds to meet the costs of acquiring minibuses, boats or canoes. Both cadets and adult volunteers are involved in fundraising. Unit management committees also apply for grants for development projects, including improvements to premises. The increasing professionalism now expected in fundraising, organising activities and running units creates significant challenges for volunteers.

⁴⁴ The other main reason was to take part in activities offered by Sea Cadet units (35%).

⁴⁵ HMS Raleigh is the Royal Navy's premier training establishment in the South West where all ratings joining the Service receive the first phase of their Naval training.

4.4 Maritime youth activities

A range of maritime experiences are available to young people in the UK including those detailed below.

- ❶ **The Combined Cadet Force (Royal Navy):** About 22,000 young people are part of the CCF (RN). Access is limited to young people attending schools which support the scheme. At the moment these are predominantly independent schools.
- ❷ **The Scout Association:** 400 Sea Scout groups offer young people up to the age of 14 scouting activities with a strong nautical flavour. Explorer Scouts (aged 14-18) and The Scout Network (aged 18-25) are not linked to Sea Scout groups, so specific support for maritime activities and interests within the Scout Association ends at 14 years.
- ❸ **Sea Training Corps:** A small number of independent uniformed groups offer nautical training to young people. Sea Training Corps members wear similar uniforms to Sea Cadets and undertake similar activities but receive little, if any, support from the Naval Service. Each group is independent and co-ordinated support is limited.
- ❹ **The Tall Ships Race:** This annual event involves over 100 ships with crews aged between 15 and 25. The survey showed that crew members were equally aware of Sea Cadets and Sea Scouts but more were members or ex-members of the Sea Scouts than of the Sea Cadets.
- ❺ **Schools and colleges:** The GCSE in Nautical Studies ended in 2003. Some schools and colleges offer Royal Yachting Association (RYA) qualifications and training.
- ❻ **The Maritime Society and Sea Cadets:** The MSSC offers opportunities for young people that are not available through other youth organisations or the state education system. Cadets can gain valuable insight into a career and life at sea through Cadet opportunities such as offshore sailing, *HMS Bristol* accommodation⁴⁶, Sea Cadet unit relationships with Navy vessels, and visits and joint events with the Naval Service.⁴⁷ Through training at working bases, such as *HMS Excellent* or *HMS Raleigh*, Cadets can gain a unique insight into life on a naval base.

The Sea Cadets' success in offering young people experiences that help them to develop into active members of the community is demonstrated by fact that 60% of adult volunteer instructors are former Cadets. Success in supporting access to maritime careers is particularly clear in patterns of recruitment to the Naval Service (see section 4.1 above).

In addition to working with Sea Cadet units, the MSSC is developing a level 2 maritime studies qualification with the Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB). This will provide academic credits for learning undertaken and vocational qualifications for specific parts of the industry. This new qualification aims to make entry to, and transfer within, the maritime industry more attractive and flexible.

CASE STUDY 8

Jo has been in the Sea Cadet unit for just over a year and is involved in all kinds of activities, and thoroughly enjoys them all. He has made good friends and learned new skills. He likes the fact that the unit prides itself on teamwork and discipline.

⁴⁶ *HMS Bristol* is a former Royal Navy ship, now static in Portsmouth, providing accommodation for Sea Cadet Units and other youth groups visiting the area.

⁴⁷ Such as the 250th anniversary celebrations of the Marine Society, where 200 Cadets had the opportunity to sail on *HMS Albion* from Portsmouth to London with Royal Navy and Royal Marine personnel, and involvement in the International Fleet Review in 2005.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The research found that the Sea Cadets is the main voluntary, open-to-all, maritime-focused, uniformed youth organisation in the UK. The decline in other opportunities for nautical activity open to young people places a major responsibility on the MSSC to ensure that it offers Cadets something that is attractive and up-to-date, and enables them to develop the skills and confidence to enjoy maritime activities and consider a maritime career.

A key conclusion of the research is that Sea Cadet units play a major role in providing opportunities for young people to develop maritime experiences and skills and to explore possibilities for careers in the Naval Service and Merchant Navy. This means the MSSC has a major responsibility to ensure that Sea Cadet units can respond to the interests and aspirations of young people.

The research led to recommendations for how the MSSC and Sea Cadet units can enhance their roles and activities. These include a review of Cadet training, and the development of new approaches and activities that attract and support Cadets and are relevant to young people today.

The following priorities for unit activities were clear:

- ☛ support for Cadets who wish to pursue a maritime career
- ☛ support for Cadets to access externally-validated courses (such as the BTEC First Diploma in Public Services and programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme)
- ☛ opportunities for Cadets to practice what they have learned in their units including good access to sailing vessels
- ☛ opportunities for Cadets to participate in decision-making in Sea Cadet units where adults listen to their views
- ☛ timely and relevant careers advice for Cadets, particularly from the Naval Service and Merchant Navy.

The MSSC is committed to developing its work to support Sea Cadet units, individual Cadets, adult instructors and unit management committee members in order to meet the interests and aspirations of Sea Cadets and young people with an interest in maritime activities. The following are priorities for action:

- ☛ identify issues that may restrict the ability of adults to volunteer, such as travel costs, and find ways of resolving them
- ☛ develop a plan to recruit and retain adult volunteers
- ☛ ensure that the training provided to Cadets and adult volunteers is of high quality and externally validated.

A full analysis of all the data collected from the research will help the MSSC to plan its support for Sea Cadet units. In line with the MSSC's commitment to involve and empower young people, a small working group of adults and young people will be responsible for:

- ☛ fully reviewing and updating the Cadet programme in the light of the research
- ☛ providing the MSSC with a clear vision for its support for Sea Cadet units
- ☛ developing an agenda for units to enhance their work.

A second working group will provide more support and training to adult volunteers.

Together these two groups will help to formulate a strategic plan for developing training, activities and experiences, that will ensure the MSSC stays in touch with young people and at the forefront of informal youth maritime and nautical training.

Forming partnerships with other organisations is the best way for the Sea Cadets to make the greatest impact with young people. Partnerships with maritime organisations can support young people's access to, and enjoyment of, maritime activities, experiences and training and raise awareness of maritime opportunities – for personal and career development, leisure and work.

Partnerships with non-maritime organisations are also important in strengthening policy and practice for work with children and young people, and may also increase interest in units and their work.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN MARITIME YOUTH GROUPS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

The research findings lead to the following recommendations for work by the MSSC.

1. Undertake an organisation-wide review of the youth training programme to ensure that the MSSC offers young people up-to-date and relevant activities.
2. Review and update the training offered to adult volunteers to ensure they are well supported and able to provide high quality training for young people.
3. Raise the profile of the MSSC and of the opportunities the Sea Cadet units offer young people through a co-ordinated communications programme promoting seafaring in educational and youth-work settings.
4. Develop the unique role of the MSSC in supporting young people interested in maritime activities by working with other voluntary youth groups to support their maritime and nautical activities.
5. Work with employers to develop extended programmes of activities for Sea Cadets that involve visits to ships and work experience at sea and ashore.
6. Work with maritime charities to increase their support for young people interested in maritime careers. This should include financial support for Sea Cadet units and individual Cadets to purchase essential equipment or undertake training that will improve young people's maritime skills and experience and allow them to make an informed choice about a maritime career.
7. Develop an interactive website providing information on the training offered by the Sea Cadets, and advice and guidance on maritime careers.
8. Consider and assess practical ways of increasing recruitment to Sea Cadet units, including employing paid development officers at district level, for a time-limited period, to develop links between Sea Cadet units and local youth, community and educational organisations.
9. Keep up-to-date with developments in government policy for young people and consider the extent to which partnerships with public and voluntary organisations would be of mutual benefit in terms of meeting government targets for inclusion, involvement and empowerment.
10. Work with maritime charities to extend the recruitment and retention strategy for both Cadets and adult volunteers. This might include bursaries for equipment and travel, and an extension of the existing bursaries for sail training to other areas of skills development.

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